

PUNCH MARCH 8 1961

Vol. CCXL

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Punch





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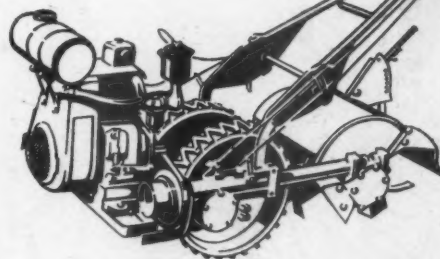
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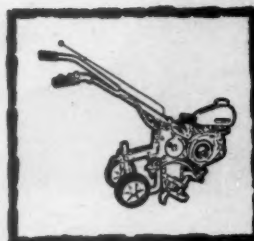
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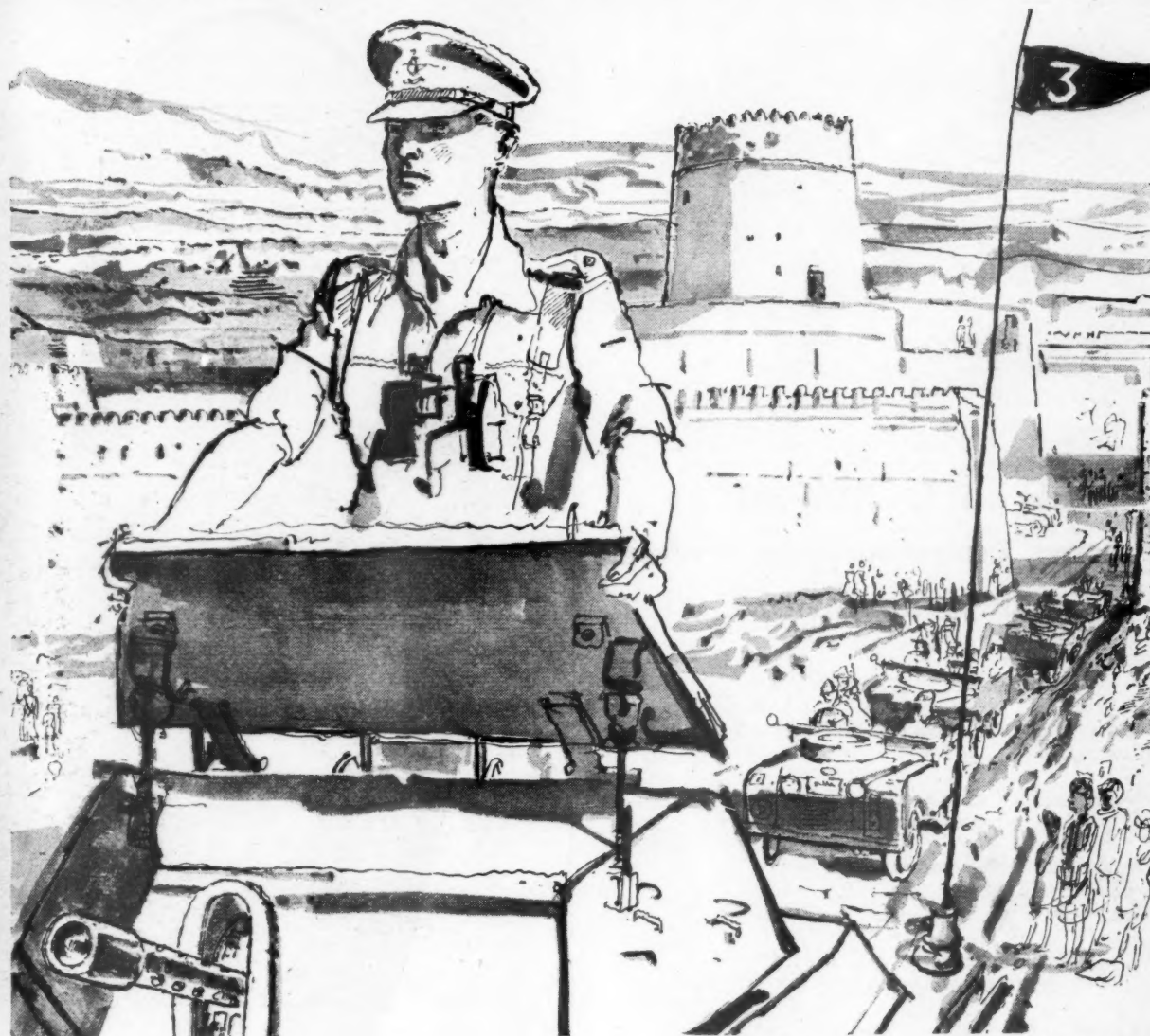
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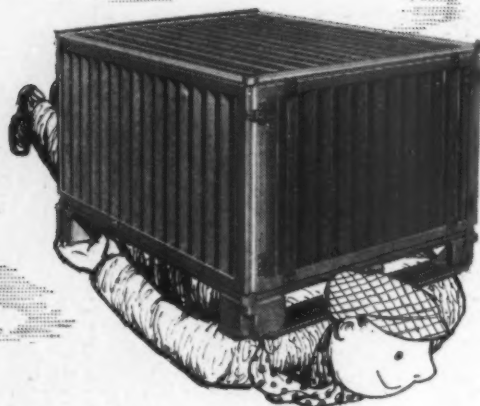
TI's Director of Personnel and a team of four experts are between them making a tour of British universities.

If you would like to know more about TI, you can arrange a meeting through your Appointments Secretary. Or you can write to the Director of Personnel at the address given below.

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P. 16



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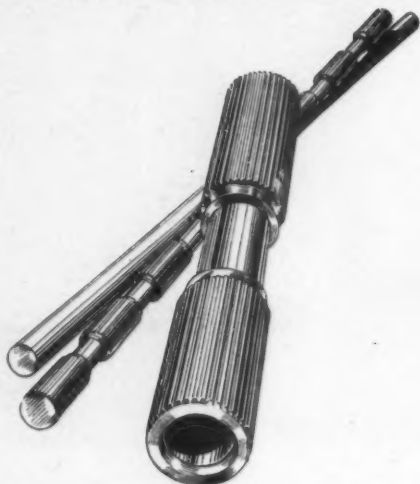


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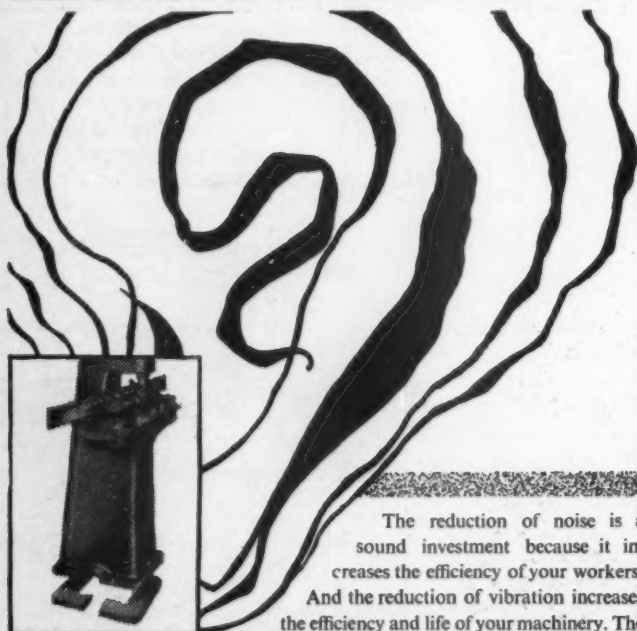
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LORD NELSON OF STAFFORD

ON MORE EFFECTIVE USE OF

BRITAIN'S TECHNICAL

RESOURCES



The Chairman with Dr. H. S. Arms, Chief Engineer of the Atomic Power Division, examining computer calculations for the reactors for Sizewell, the £55 million atomic power station to be built by the English Electric, Babcock & Wilcox, Taylor Woodrow group.

The Annual General Meeting of The English Electric Company Limited will be held on March 23rd in London. In the course of his statement circulated to stockholders, the Chairman, Lord Nelson of Stafford, said:

Output for 1960 was practically identical with that for 1959. Orders booked in 1960 was substantially higher than ever before and as a result there are good prospects for increased output in 1961. The Parent Company and certain of its subsidiaries showed substantially better results in 1960 than in the previous year.

However, after allowing for adverse factors there is a Group profit after tax applicable to members of the Company of £3,142,580 compared with £3,125,870 last year.

INVESTMENT FOR THE FUTURE

The immense developments in the electrical industry since the war have necessitated great research and development effort, larger workshops and machine tools, testing equipment of greater capacity and a considerable investment in education and training. You can therefore be confident that we have equipped ourselves to meet any future demands made upon us.

Rationalisation by merging of interests, research agreements and other methods is constantly under review to avoid wasteful duplication in the use of scientific and technical personnel and to ensure maximum loading of production facilities.

Unfortunately, the word rationalisation is sometimes misunderstood. It should not raise fears in the minds of those who work in industry because of changes which may take place in their employment, for the aim of such moves is to bring more work to this country and to ensure greater stability of employment.

COMPETITION IN EXPORT MARKETS

Your Company has always played a leading part in export business, and something approaching a third of our great output goes abroad.

We must emphasise that 50 per cent. of our costs are for raw materials and manufactured accessories, and we believe that those firms who supply us with them must also concentrate on cost reduction and share with us the responsibility of obtaining some of the overseas business now being lost to foreign competitors. Our main difficulty during the year has been to meet low price competition and offers of better credit financing terms.

The Government's medium term export credit insurance period is often not long enough for capital goods and too expensive as compared with facilities offered by other countries. We, therefore, welcome the Government's assurance of encouragement to export business by improved credit facilities.

In the long term our economy will depend on the expansion of our overseas trade in capital goods. We are well equipped to provide these goods if our offers to the customer are associated with competitive credit facilities.

MANUFACTURE OVERSEAS

Political and economic changes occurring in all parts of the world are affecting British business in two principal ways. In the first place, many

countries had been industrialised in the past by British finance and enterprise and many of their undertakings were staffed by British engineers, who naturally had a tendency to accept automatically British standards and British equipment. In modern conditions these ties have been greatly loosened and what were previously regarded primarily as British markets are now scenes of intense international competition.

In the second place, many countries wish to move from an economy based mainly on primary industries to one including an increasing element of manufacture. As part of this process they progressively manufacture goods that formerly were bought from Britain and other industrial countries. I, personally, welcome these changes because I believe that they offer us even greater opportunities for export of capital goods in the future.

For this and other reasons your Company has played its part in developing overseas manufacture having established factories in Canada, Australia, South Africa and India. These activities also enable us to maintain a selling organisation ready to meet these countries' needs and able to deal with special projects involving the importation of British equipment.

1960 TURNOVER ANALYSED

The breakdown of every £100 of our 1960 sales turnover was as follows:

	£
Cost of raw materials and bought out and semi-finished articles embodied in our own products	48.15
Cost of Wages and Salaries	33.93
Depreciation, maintenance, power, heat, light, rent, rates, insurance, etc.	12.22
Interest on debentures, bank overdraft and bills	1.70
	<hr/>
	£ 96.00
Paid in Taxation	1.73
Retained in the business	1.09
Paid in net dividends on Preference and Ordinary Stocks	1.18
	<hr/>
	4.00
	<hr/>
	£100.00

Lord Nelson of Stafford then reviewed the achievements of the principal companies of the Group:

The English Electric Company; Marconi's Wireless Telegraph Company; Marconi International Marine Communication Company; D. Napier & Son; English Electric Valve Co.; and Vulcan Foundry and Robert Stephenson & Hawthorns.

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If you have to surrender your policy before maturity you still get all the Units allocated to it, or, if you prefer, their cash value.

Let us take an example

You are thirty and in good health. You take out a 20-year policy with a premium of £100 p.a. In the first sixteen years, £92.16.0 will be allocated each year to acquiring Units, and after that £97 p.a. At the end of the twenty years, you will receive all the Units thus bought *plus* the additional Units bought with the income from them. If you die after, say, eight years, the benefit will consist of the Units thus far accumulated plus £1,200 in cash, i.e. twelve years' premiums. And each year you pay a premium, you may be able to claim (at present rates) up to £15.10.0 in income tax relief—in which case the net annual cost to you will be £84.10.0.

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PUNCH

Vol. CCXL No. 6286
March 8 1961

Edited by
Bernard Hollowood



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Subscriptions

If you wish to have *Punch* sent to your home each week, send £2 16s. 0d.* to the Publisher, *Punch*, 10 Bouverie Street, London, E.C.4.

*For overseas rates see page 410.

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The London Charivari

ONE of the speakers at the Young Conservatives' Conference said, a trifle melodramatically, "We have the disgraceful spectacle of an elderly gentleman who calls himself a peer sitting in Whitehall through an afternoon." This must be the first time that Bertrand Russell has been accused of posing as a lord. I had always thought he was the most persistent commoner between Beatrice Webb and Anthony Wedgwood-Benn.

Sight and Sound

SCIENTISTS at Imperial College investigating the way people hear at cocktail parties have discovered that



it is easier if you turn sideways to your *vis-à-vis* instead of facing her. And if this happens to give her a look at your profile, well, so much the better, perhaps.

Whiter than White's

I APPLAUD the ITA decision to inject some ethics into detergent advertising. Will the new integrity spill over into other spheres? A somewhat dubious claim was recently made in one of those little square bargains-by-post advertisements. At 15s. 11d. it offered a waterproof, waist-length,

hooded garment, rich in enormous pockets and tying at the neck and middle with what seemed from the illustration to be black string. The



copy-writer, after letting himself go with such epithets as "delightful," "perfect," "magnificent," "fashionable" and "adjustable" must have chewed his pen for some time in search of the ultimate inducement: "Acceptable at the Club."

Some Talk of Kasavubu

THESE "paratroops" of General Mobutu's worry me. Did the Belgians have airborne Congolese soldiers in training before they left, or has General Mobutu trained them since the Congo gained its independence? If so who provided the aircraft and the parachutes? Or has the word "paratroop" simply come to mean a particularly tough and brutal kind of soldier? We all know that the tow-row-row-row-row-row of the British Grenadiers was in praise not of the First Regiment of Foot Guards but of the personnel of the seventeenth-century equivalent of the two-inch mortar platoons; perhaps the word paratroops is on its way to a similar upgrading.



"The length of a cricket pitch, I regret to say, is 20·1168 metres. How far does a batsman run during an innings of . . ."

Put a Million in the Poor Box

THE Finnish Supreme Court has fined a former Cabinet minister £200 for "administrative negligence." The report doesn't say how this figure was arrived at, but if it's on some sort of *pro rata* basis there must be a few Whitehall characters who are glad no one got hauled into court over the Blue Streak.

Political Macrocism

HOW easy it is to draw new lines on the map of Africa and feel slightly irritated that the inhabitants will not reorganize their chaotic continent more logically. Throw Nyasaland in with Tanganyika! Hand over Southern Rhodesia to the Union of South Africa! What about a new state including everywhere north of the Sahara? How many people in Britain really appreciate that Capetown is as far from Alexandria as London is from San Francisco? Think of that and then remember what a job the Local Government Boundary people have to get a few parishes transferred from one county to another.

Bars, Iron, Bashers for the Use of

EVERY month or so as long as I have been reading newspapers there has been a story about a convict dotting a warder one with an iron bar. Why are prisons so full of them? They are not found in the average house or in hotels or schools or factories. One would have imagined that in prisons they would be cemented into windows, not left loose about the place. Can it be

that prisoners saw them out of the windows and then find the prospect of the world outside so repellent that, instead of crawling through the hole, they stay inside and use them for fighting?

Artist's Colonies?

CRITICISMS of Mr. Thorneycroft's one-man art show, unlike the references to Mr. Macleod's book on bridge, made comparatively little play with political analogy. It's true that one critic referred to the artist's "intelligent feeling for colour"—but even that would have had more edge if he'd been talking about Mr. Macleod.

Sartorial Note

OBSERVED in a window of a young men's outfitters in Reading, among the jeans, leather jackets, and Dayglo socks: sawn-off handkerchief corners, tastefully arranged in four little pyramids and stitched to a piece of cardboard all ready for slipping into the breast pocket. "Hank Tops 1s."

Slaves of the Steppes

THIS is an unfamiliar picture of the henpecked Ivanovitch that we get from British women engineers, who reported to the Institution of Electrical Engineers that on a recent tour they found crusty comrades being forced



"Sorry, gentlemen, but could we please try that 'One Big Happy Family' look just once more?"

In next Wednesday's
PUNCH

Looking for a Job?

There will be two pages of "Situations Vacant" for those with adventurous tastes.

Diminishing Returns

2. Soccer

By GEOFFREY GREEN

to carry home the heavy shopping and transport all laundry linen. Could there be the seeds of a co-existence peace drive here with simultaneous marches to Aldermaston and Magnitogorsk featuring banners "Husbands of the world, unite! You have nothing to lose but your apron-strings"? Probably that short-lived British war song "We're going to hang out the washing on the Siegfried Line" was translated from the lyric of a Russian virago determined to inculcate the spirit of service in young Muscovite recruits.

The Sherwood Touch

SHEFFIELD police who found a "Robin Hood" hat at the scene of an armed raid by masked men are said to be inquiring among the local poor to see if any of them have been unusually free with their money since the raid.

Seen the Picture at the Gaumont?

THE cinema manager who is going to install flash-cameras in his cinema to take "candid-camera" shots of Teds misbehaving during shows may have hit, all unaware, on a scheme that will save the faltering fortunes of the cinema. His idea is to exhibit the tell-tale pictures in his foyer so that the guilty youngsters slink away ashamed and resolve never to tear a cinema apart again as long as they live. It's much more likely that he will be deluged with requests for extra prints of the pictures, and he's only got to charge enough for them to ensure himself a handsome additional source of revenue.

Case of the Missing Earl

TIGER, tiger, burning bright,
Mind that deadly left and right,
After all, you can't assume
That the rifleman's Lord Home.

—MR. PUNCH



"My Boys!"

[John Tenniel's cartoon of 1885]



"My Old Boys!"

[The Commonwealth Prime Ministers Conference opens in London on March 8]

Diminishing Returns

What is happening to the old staples of British entertainment? To the theatre, the cinema, soccer and cricket? Are they in fact declining? And if so, why?



THE CINEMA

By PAUL DEHN

Formerly "News Chronicle" and now "Daily Herald" film-critic, PAUL DEHN won a Hollywood "Oscar" for co-authorship of the original story of "Seven Days To Noon" and a British Film Academy Award with his screen-play for Asquith's "Orders To Kill." Has also written two books of poetry, the libretto for Lennox Berkeley's "A Dinner Engagement" and numerous contributions to West End revue.

NO new art has ever killed an old one, though it may redistribute public patronage; and similar redistributions occur inevitably after the invention of a new mechanical "pipeline" for a particular art's dissemination.

The emergence (between two world wars) of the cinema as a new art never came remotely near to killing the theatre—though it closed thousands of individual theatres in hundreds of countries, and reshuffled audiences with a flurry which had just begun to settle when the cinema, in its turn, was threatened by TV.

The new threat is industrial rather than artistic, because TV is not an art (like the theatre) but a pipeline (like the gramophone).

Do I hear yells of protest from Lime Grove, Granada and all channels? Then I must as loudly protest that *channels* is what they all are.

A playwright with a theme to state must ask himself which, among available art-media, is the best medium in which to state it. He may legitimately choose theatre, cinema or sound radio. Each offers him its own highly individual challenges, disciplines and scopes. One could list them in three columns and waste a great deal of space, mapping obvious boundaries. Your artist examines the boundaries and, setting aside the irrelevant factor of payment, unmercenary

chooses the medium which he thinks will display his theme better than any other medium.

Now what, in the way of creative dramaturgy, can TV display that cannot better be displayed either by cinema or by theatre? The question is fundamental to any analysis of the cinema's decline from popularity.

I have put it often to reputable TV drama-producers who huffed, puffed and failed to answer it satisfactorily. "TV," they say, "is more 'live' than cinema." But less "live" than theatre. "TV is more 'fluid' than theatre." But less "fluid" than cinema. "TV is more 'intimate' than either of its rivals. It addresses itself to small *fragmented* groups." But cannot intimacy and fragmentation (beugh!) be achieved much more powerfully by writing for theatre or cinema in a way which makes each member of a huge, assembled audience feel individually lonely? Reginald Rose's *Twelve Angry Men*, designed to make us all feel like solitary jurymen, was *more* effective when re-scripted by its author for the cinema than it was originally on TV. So, for different reasons, were Chayefsky's *Marty* and Rattigan's *The Final Test*.

Aesthetically speaking, TV can do nothing for a dramatist which either theatre or cinema cannot do better. If it is a drama medium at all, it is at best a bastard one—begotten by the screen out of the stage, and a dilution of the good qualities to be found in both. Dammit, it even cheats by using film to get itself out of technical *impasses* which are the product of its own mechanical limitations. To ask a serious dramatist to write for it specifically is almost as absurd as to ask a serious composer to write specifically for the gramophone.

The basic battle between the theatre and the cinema was a straight battle between two arts. For that reason the small but solid core of enlightened filmgoers, who have been won to the cinema's artistry, are not now going to abandon it in favour of patronizing a pipeline for the dissemination of entertainment. But the huge majority of former filmgoers, who went to the cinema for entertainment's sake rather than

art's, are defecting by the million—because, in the matter of entertainment*, TV has the cinema absolutely whacked.

Statistics bear witness to the vehemence of the whacking. Between 1936 and 1946 the number of annual admissions to cinemas in Great Britain rose from 917 millions to 1,635 millions. BBC Television re-opened that summer. Over the next nine years annual admissions fell, slowly but very surely, to 1,181 millions; and the number of cinemas in the country dwindled from 4,750 to 4,483.

When ITV opened in September 1955, the pace of the cinema's retreat quickened at a speed comparable with that of Germany's after the late American entry in both world wars:

ADMISSIONS IN GT. BRITAIN (in millions)

1956.....	1101
1957.....	915
1958.....	755
1959.....	601
1960.....	520

CINEMAS IN GT. BRITAIN

1956.....	4391
1957.....	4191
1958.....	3996
1959.....	3457
1960.....	3100

Nobody in Wardour Street can prophesy when the retreat will be halted, and everybody has different ideas on how the line should be stabilized.

As an art, of course, the cinema has not retreated at all.

*E.g. *What's My Line?*, *This Is Your Life*, *Monitor*, *Meeting Point*, *Face To Face*, etc.

It has advanced, both technically and commercially, to capture scattered little strong-points not only in the so-called "Art Houses," where masterpieces like Bergman's *Wild Strawberries* and Truffaut's *Les quatre Cent Coups* can pack the Academy and the Curzon for months, but also on the big commercial circuits where a stylistic triumph like Reisz's *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning* can earn glittering dividends at the box office.

The people who pay to see films like these do so because they know that they will find nothing comparable on TV—even if TV hires the same films and debases them by projecting them on to its still primitively grainy little screen.

This public deserves, and is beginning to get, encouragement. Just as in the old screen-v.-stage days club theatres popped up while ordinary theatres closed down, so now (while ordinary cinemas wilt) club cinemas are mushrooming. They do not yet seem to be abusing the immunity to censorship which they share with their theatrical counterparts. They can and do show good films, like *The Wild One*, to which the Censor has denied a public showing. But they also can and do show good films *per se*—whether in revival or for the first time. They operate independently of the flourishing Film Society movement. The biggest and best of them, run under British Film Institute auspices, has its headquarters at the National Film Theatre. Gala Film Distributors use about a dozen of their London and provincial cinemas for club showings. More are on the way. The outlook for the survival of cinema as an art is sunny.

Much sunnier than the outlook for the cinema as entertainment! Here, a tycoon must ask himself the simple



"That's it—you've got it!"

commercial question: "What, in the way of entertainment, can film do so much better than TV that the televiewer will leave *his* armchair for a seat in *my* cinema?" The answer is precious little. But that little is so precious to the tycoon that he must find it or go bankrupt.

As a preliminary act of self-protection, he may make very bad films (about cops, robbers, cowboys, Indians and medieval outlaws) exclusively for projection on TV. This has the double benefit of keeping him in the money and showing

televiewers how much better are the entertainment films to be seen in proper cinemas.

Spiritually fortified and financially secure, he can now re-confront the question "What *sort* of entertainment films?" and though he may not yet know all the answers, we at least know his. Movies (he says) will attract the televiewer, if they are:

1. *Longer than anything of which TV is capable.* Viz.:

SPARTACUS.....3hrs. 8mins.

THE ALAMO.....3hrs. 10mins.

BEN HUR.....3hrs. 32mins.

2. *Wider than anything of which TV is capable.* It is probably only a matter of years before the ends of the Todd-AO horseshoe meet.

3. *More thickly studded with money-making stars than anything of which TV is capable.* In America during 1960, these stars were Doris Day, Rock Hudson, Cary Grant, Elizabeth Taylor, Debbie Reynolds, Tony Curtis, Sandra Dee, Frank Sinatra, Jack Lemmon and John Wayne. Write a film script co-starring all of them, and you're quids in.

You or I might try to tell our tycoon that, while there is sound showmanship in his three provisos, he might add a fourth to the effect that a long, wide, starry film's script should be more literate than most of those to which televiewers have become resigned. Was it not (we could ask him) Christopher Fry's dialogue for *Ben Hur* which perhaps tipped the scale finally in its favour as a money-spinner? But to this he could reply that literate dialogue had very little to do with the thumping commercial success of *Hercules Unchained*, and my goodness! he would be right.

He is probably right, too, to have dropped a further proviso (recently fashionable) that movies should have teenage appeal, because very young lovers prefer to make very young love in a dark cinema rather than in a dim TV-room in front of the family. He has realized that very young lovers pay little *aesthetic* attention to anything but each other.

Meanwhile, as he gropes toward the accurate premonition of popular taste which no show-businessman has ever yet achieved, public patronage continues to reshuffle itself and his cinemas continue to close down.

Some will make him money by re-opening in new capacities. Eight of the Rank Organisation's cinemas are now dance-studios, and one (at Golders Green) is the first of twenty projected bowling alleys.

Within the next decade audiences will have sorted themselves out—unless (and this is not quite beyond the bounds of possibility) TV finds its D. W. Griffith and becomes an art in its own right as unforeseeably as did the primitive cinema.

On that day, whose dawning I still doubt, the cinema will take another terrific socking. But, like the theatre, it will remain an art in its own right and a medium for untelevisable entertainment. Certainly it will not die.

Next week: Soccer—By Geoffrey Green



"Britain has contributed 7,000 blankets to Bedouins who have been seriously affected by a drought in southern Jordan."

Guardian

Wet blankets, undoubtedly.



Brookbank



"Form or no form, the 'Daily Worker' will nap them."

More Secrets from the Past

By B. A. YOUNG

OBOYOBOI GORGE

WHAT may well prove to be the oldest crown cork known to man has been found here by Dr. C. J. M. Crikey, the anthropologist.

It is thought to be at least 500,000 years old. "I cannot yet give an exact estimate of its age," Dr. Crikey said, "but I am sending it back to the museum for radio-cola tests, and these should establish more definitely how old it is."

The finding of the crown cork throws an entirely new light on the use of crown corks by prehistoric men. Until quite recently it was assumed that crown corks had come into use only in comparatively recent times. If the radio-cola tests confirm Dr. Crikey's estimates, all previous theories about the use of crown corks will have to be revised.

The cork appears to have come from the top of a prehistoric hula-cola bottle. "The bottle would probably have been used by a teenage boy or girl," said

Dr. Crikey, "which shows that things were not so very different 500,000 years ago from the way they are now."

The cork lining layer has disappeared completely, leaving only the circular metal disc with the characteristic corrugated rim. There is no trace of any inscription having appeared on the crown cork, but X-ray pictures may reveal some kind of prehistoric trademark under the layer of oxidation which encrusts the metal at present.

Our Scientific Correspondent writes:

The Oboyoboi Gorge, where the prehistoric crown cork was found, is a 300-foot-deep cleft carved out of the barren surrounding countryside of Tanganyika by the seasonal waters of the Oboyoboi River. The age of any remains found in the bank can be accurately assessed from their height above the level of the river-bed, the recently discovered "pre-Zinj man," calculated to be 700,000 years old, being

at the bottom and Mr. Julius Nyerere at the top.

It seems possible that the remote ancestor of man who inhabited the area at the epoch to which the crown cork has been assigned—we may conveniently refer to him as the "post-Zinj man"—used rudimentary stone tools to fashion crown corks for his crude bottles, probably by cutting a rough circle from a sheet of tin and then laboriously turning up the edges and pressing in the corrugations one at a time. The cork lining would then have been cut from the bark of one of the giant cork trees that may have flourished there at the time and shaped to fit with the aid of a primitive stone knife.

The radio-cola tests to be applied to the crown cork provide a peculiarly elegant method of measuring the age of any prehistoric object.

Cola exists in the form of a number of isotopes. One of these is the radioactive isotope radio-cola. This decay

at a rate which is accurately known, throwing off an electron to become stable bitter lemon. By comparing the amount of free radio-cola present in a bottle of cola with the amount theoretically present before the bottle was opened, it is possible to calculate how long the sample has been decaying, and so arrive at an accurate estimate of its age.

If the radio-cola tests confirm Dr. Crikey's estimate that the crown cork is 500,000 years old, it will be at least 499,950 years older than any other crown cork known to exist.

STOP PRESS

A message from Dr. Crikey's camp at Oboyoboi Gorge states that the crown cork found there last week is not prehistoric but was dropped by Armand and Michaela Denis during their visit to the site a year ago. "The whole thing was a laughable mistake," Dr. Crikey said, "but it emphasizes more than ever the tremendous importance of checking and double-checking all one's calculations."

The King-Size Emporium

PATRICK SKENE CATLING visits the new Daily Mirror building

THE jolly eruptions in Holborn Circus this week originated in champagne bottles. In that most unplebeian of beverages, the world's greatest plebeian publishing organization, the *Daily Mirror* Group, has been drinking toasts in honour of the formal opening of what must certainly be the world's most palatial, most magnificently equipped newspaper factory. The bill was £9,500,000, and that didn't include the cost of the potted plant on Cassandra's window-sill, which was 18s. 6d. extra.

The new building is a welcome marvel, a symbol of fairly earned popularity and enormous financial success, which is especially impressive in these days of such melancholy decline and decay and depression in

some areas of British journalism. Some people, reasonably enough, are suffering from pangs of anxiety about the overwhelming dominance of the group now that it has acquired Odhams Press; but if any of these people were in the *Mirror* building the other day they were effectively disguised by smiles.

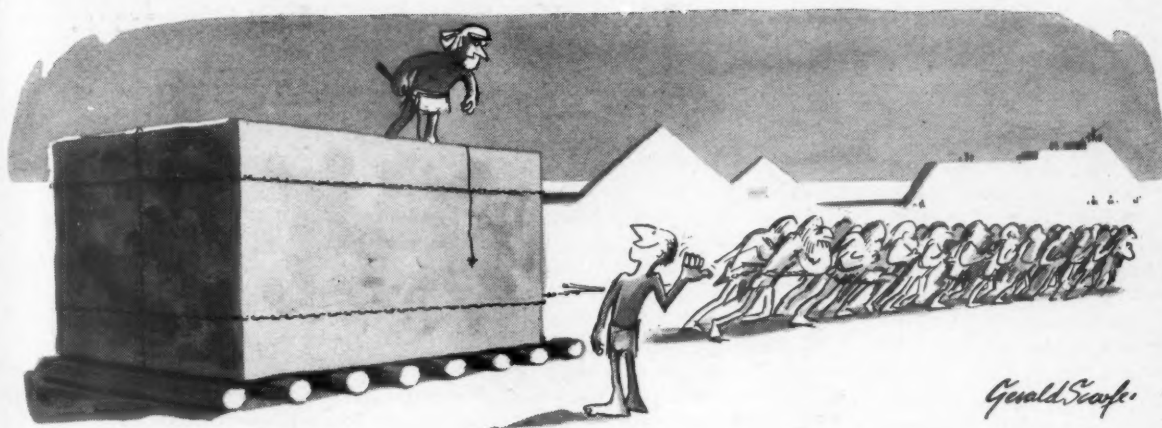
In fact the group is so vast that the full extent of its assets has not as yet been precisely measured. It includes such disparate publications as the *Rhodesian Bottlestore & Hotel Review*, *Tit-Bits*, *Ruff's Guide to the Turf*, *Coke and Gas*, *Poultry World*, *The Off-Licence Journal*, *Jack and Jill*, and *The Stock Exchange Gazette*. The total value has been estimated to exceed one hundred million pounds, with thirty-one million pounds of it invested abroad, in Canada, the West Indies, Africa, Norway and Italy. The number of employees is believed to be about 45,000, which would be more than enough to form a couple of infantry divisions. Three thousand of them work in the new building.

According to Hugh Cudlipp in his exuberant history of the *Mirror*, *Publish and Be Damned!*, the late Lord Northcliffe, who founded the paper in 1903 "for gentlewomen," was "delighted" at Fontainebleau to find that his head was too big for Napoleon's hat. If Northcliffe had been able to foresee the colossal development exemplified by the move from Geraldine House, the quaint, stale little wedding cake of a building in a cul-de-sac off Fetter Lane, to the grandeur and glitter of the new place, his hat size might well have increased several-fold. On the other hand, if he had been able to look into the future he might have felt a regretful sentimental twinge: Geraldine House was named after his mother, and its name will be destroyed with it. The new building is apparently beyond the scale of cosy personal sentiment; the new building has an address, 33 Holborn Circus, but it has no official name.

William Connor, that master of Rabelaisian denigration, the other morning turned from the Cassandra column he was writing on artificial trees



"I've heard nice things about you—that you're a bachelor, for instance."



with wheels for mobile shade, peered balefully over his spectacles, and said that he had composed some suitable names for the building during the first week of occupancy, when maladjustment of the air conditioning system had raised the temperature in his office to eighty-five degrees, but he was sorry to say they were unprintable. He has adopted the motto of H.M.S. *Cassandra*, *Furiosior Undis*.

Sir Owen Williams and Partners, the architects, have made good use of the one-acre site. There is a massive horizontal block, four storeys above ground, that house the editorial and mechanical publishing departments, surmounted by a narrower eight-storey tower containing the advertising, circulation and other offices. The over-all appearance is of orthodox modernity, of functional efficiency, brightness and colour. The exterior is enlivened with rectangles of enamelled panelling, red, blue and light grey. The flat roof is 169 feet above the street—high enough for a splendid view of St. Paul's, and high enough to make one feel a morbid impulse to jump off.

There are four basements, 45 feet deep, where 50 tons of ink, 1,000 tons of paper, 68,500 gallons of water, and 81,500 gallons of oil can be stored. There are five press lines and colour printing is possible. The total floor area is 10½ acres and the total volume of the building is over 7,000,000 cubic feet. One hundred and forty thousand tons of soil were excavated for the foundations. Eight tons of putty and 35,000 square feet of glass were used. There will eventually be 1,800

telephone extensions. The library can accommodate 4,000,000 press cuttings and 1,000,000 photographic prints. The canteen will provide 2,500 meals a day, grilled steak and vegetables costing 3s. 3d. The typewriters in the newsroom are chained to the desks, like books in a mediaeval library, as a precaution against theft, but the chains are encased in pale grey plastic that matches the furniture. A tribe of stray cats has been evicted from the hot-air ducts, painlessly, in accordance with the paper's popular slogan "The *Daily Mirror* believes in kindness to animals." There are seven automatic passenger lifts, which all travel at the same speed (700 feet per minute), including the ones used to carry Cecil Harmsworth King, the chairman, up to his private suite, the directors' dining-room, and the boardroom, on the ninth floor. An article on the status indicators in the building reported that Mr. King's lift rose faster than the others, but the allegation has been denied. However, it is true that some offices have wall-to-wall carpets and some of the less important office floors are covered with rubber. It is also true that only senior executives eat their meals in the directors' dining-room and have shower-baths under the directors' showers. And why not? There are 3,170 fluorescent light fittings. A *Mirror* statistician has calculated that if they were laid end to end they would stretch 2½ miles, but there is no plan for a demonstration. All the facts about the building were laid end to end and they filled twenty-six press releases.

The machine room, containing the

printing presses, gives one the impression that one is in the engine room of an ocean liner. In other parts of the building, where some of the walls are decorated with polished marble, one might be in a first-class Italian hotel. On the directors' floor there is a specially rich variety of wall-coverings, including dyed grey ash, dark grey granite, yacca, and antique German glass. The boardroom chairs are covered in purple leather and the ceiling lights may be brightened or dimmed. Mr. King, who set a good example to the rest of the popular newspapers when he ordered his reporters and photographers that they must not intrude on privacy, is able to achieve privacy himself in his suite on the directors' floor.

His son, Michael King, who is one of the best informed foreign editors in the business, was perspiring in a small (carpeted) windowless room on the editorial floor. "It's still too hot," he told a rather harassed-looking heating engineer. King went to visit William Connor, whose room has windows and a cocktail cabinet and a clockwork model sputnik that *beeps* and plays "Mother Russia."

One of Mr. Connor's criticisms of his room was that it wasn't sound-proof. "We're talking like a lot of old lags in here," he said. "Out of the corners of our mouths."

Roland Hurman, the *Daily Mirror's* industrial editor said that working in the new building wasn't like working in a newspaper office at all; it was so quiet.

"Perhaps this move is going to have



"An alert, intelligent dog would have given the alarm."

a profound psychological effect on the staff," Mr. Connor said.

But a sub-editor suggested that the same sort of fare as usual was being prepared for the paper's 14,104,000 devoted readers. The schedule for the following morning read as though it might have been prepared in the intimate chaos of Geraldine House—"Frenzied Mourners at Funeral for King of Morocco," a leader on the decimal system, and "something about a baby hippo." It was the mixture as before, served as fresh as to-morrow morning. No wonder the directors were in a champagne mood.

☆

BUDGET MEMOS No. 6

Attention Mr. Selwyn Lloyd

Loudly demand dishes on menus should have contents disclosed on pain of *ad valorem* duty payable by management. E.g., "Chef's Hot-pot Surprise" carries penalty, but breakdown by ingredients is exempt. Extra duty for mystery dishes in French. Same goes for wines. None of this "Beaujolais," "Chianti" blanket nomenclature, but vineyards printed large. Additional fines for failing to state size of glass wine sold by.

Hon. Secretary,
League Against Degustatory Cloak-and-Daggery.

Duodecimal Dan

The South African Government, in order to popularize and explain their new decimal system, have launched a pop song, "Decimal Dan." The Duodecimal Society of Great Britain, just now in need of all the help it can get, might adopt the idea.

SOLO: Duodecimal Dan

Is a sensible man

He don't count in tens, oh no!

One, two, three, four, five, six seven, eight—

So far it's corny but, man, just wait,

There's *nine, dek, el* and *do*!

MASSED CHOIR (wonderingly): Do-o-o-o-o-o-o?

SOLO: Do-one, do-two and now you're away—

Just keep on counting until you say

Elty-dek, elty-el, one gro!

CHOIR (triumphantly): Gro-o-o-o-o-o-o-o!

SOLO: The months in the year

Stay just as they were,

Inches and pence also.

Do shiny shillings make a tidy little pound.

Lop some yards off the mile and you're left with a round

Figure which we call ten gro.*

CHOIR: Ten gro-o-o-o-o-o-o.

SOLO: A quarter's '3 and a third's '4

(*parlando*: Man, jus' dig dat duodecimal point!)

And it ain't agwine to recur no more.

Which only goes to show

You must vote for dek, el, do.

CHOIR (militantly): And gro-o-o-o-o-o-o-o.

*And if anyone at the AGM of the Duodecimal Society next Tuesday suggests "One Douzand" I hope he gets thrown out.

— PETER DICKINSON

While-U-Wait for Godot

By J. B. BOOTHROYD

UNLIKE actors and playwrights, I dare say, I feel a sharp sympathy for the theatre critics of our national dailies at this time. When you think that Mr. Emlyn Williams, after some weeks in the triple-bill at the Criterion, told TV audiences that he still didn't understand the plays he was in, you can see what the critic is up against: after only one performance he leaves his seat and makes for the telephone, there to tell to-morrow's breakfast tables whether the new offering is muck or masterpiece. No wonder that his findings have a curt, arbitrary smack; and that the recent play at the Royalty drew "Fascinating theatre" from one critic and "Desperately third rate" from another.

These chaps have to think too fast,

and with nothing but a few indecipherable notes in their programme margin to guide them. Anyone who has made a critical jotting in the dim light of the stalls knows how it can equally well read "Heavenly characterization" or "Hopeless rigmarole" at a later consultation. Faced with an impatient Fleet Street switchboard and the need to get *something* over the wire before you can go home and forget the whole thing, you naturally come down heavily on one side or the other, and your mind

flies to the staccato, over-emphatic cliché. What is wanted is a wider range of epithet, synonym, metaphor and simile instantly available, and it is with this in mind that I proffer the following key or chart. Critics are recommended to paste it on a stout card under protective polythene, when it will last until their paper is merged with someone else's.

PLAY..... THEATRE..... STAR.....

SETTING

Brothel
Gaol
Public Convenience
Madhouse
Sewage Works
Thieves' Kitchen
Ordinary Kitchen

THEME (*These are not mutually exclusive*)

Prostitution
Homosexuality
Lesbianism
Alcoholism
Dæmonic Possession
Infanticide
Lunacy
Juvenile Delinquency



PHRASES FOR OR AGAINST THE PLAY

FOR. Probed with exquisite delicacy. Beauty of revelation. The author touches pitch and is not defiled. The ultimate vindication of the living theatre. A remarkable feat of dramatic intelligence. Rarely, if ever, in the history of London's West End . . . Evokes an irresistible emotional response.

AGAINST. Gnarled with lust. Lascivious ravings. Stench of decay. At least to sit beside a cesspool costs nothing. An uncanny nose for the shameful, degrading and repulsive. An evening of inspissated tedium. If this is what has happened to Shakespeare's tongue, roll on the bomb. Innermost iniquities laid bare. Rarely, if ever . . .



FOR AND AGAINST PRODUCTION AND PERFORMERS

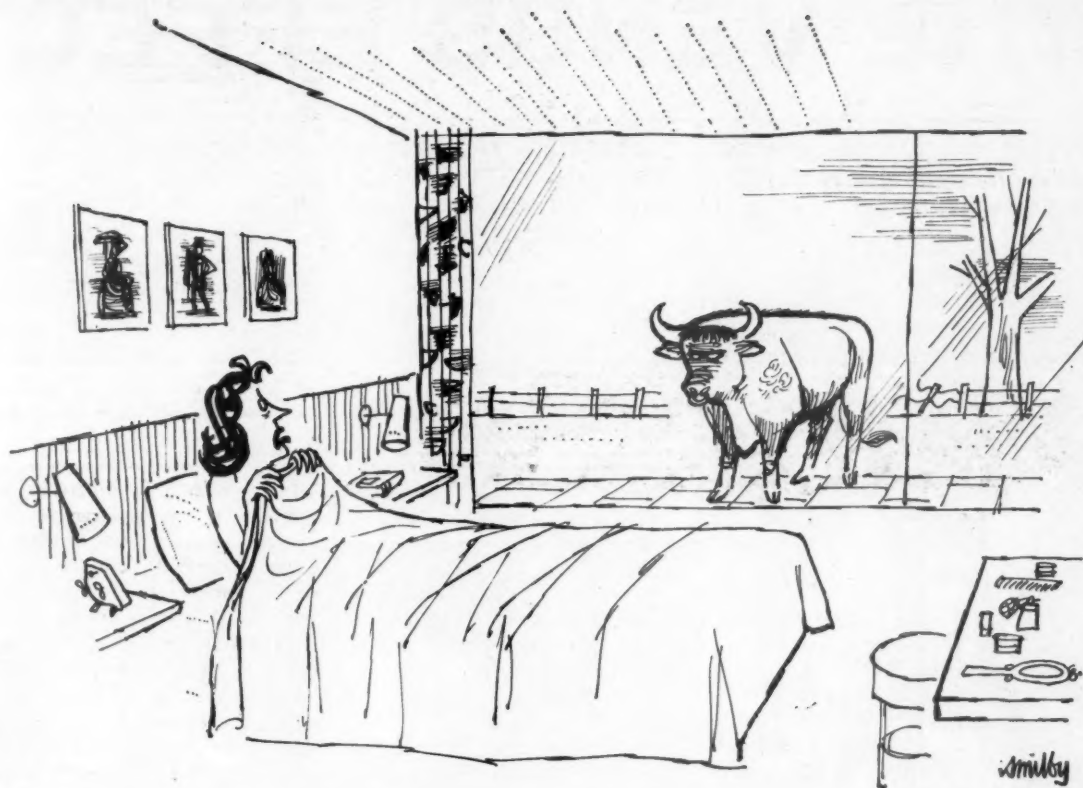
FOR. As the murdered toddler, Miss X dies with perfection. Poignant as the mutilated lunatic is . . . Wrapped in the proud tatters of his filthy rags. Her tearful quest on all fours among the empty bottles and tins . . . Bears us from one scene of rat-riddled squalor to another at a cracking pace. Worth six of *Lady Windermere's Fan*. . . skill that keeps the lighting down to a minimal grey-green. See it and die.

AGAINST. Meaningless, motiveless muck-raking. Indefensible scenes. Unsavory creatures of the shadows. No breath of life, only mephitic exhalations. Largely inaudible, mostly invisible, the cast would have done better to stay at home. At least the toilet-roll gets no mention in the programme credits. Sluggish meanderings. Designs failed entirely to catch the authentic note of a mental home.

USEFUL ALL-PURPOSE PHRASES AND IMAGES

Like a whale under the harpoon. A writer of shuddering insensitivity. Under a lecher's moon. No less clinically informative than a working model of the digestive processes. Might well be advertised as a family-way play. Pathetic philoprogenitive preoccupation. The lice positively rattle on the threadbare linoleum. His art transcends these gruesome materials. The drooling grimace of life. A marvellous reek. Stains the emotions ineradicably. Bring your intelligence and this playwright will insult it.

This of course is only the prototype. With extended experience of the new theatre, further classifications will suggest themselves. It may even be possible to find a phrase or two for the play that falls uneasily between the two stools of rank obscenity and mere run-of-the-mill unsavouriness. The next step will be to transfer the whole idea to a system of punched cards, so that a critic can borrow a cigar-piercer from the nearest impresario, make a dozen brisk incisions, drop the thing into the Fleet Street machine, and see it turned into criticism on the spot. As a matter of fact I don't see why I shouldn't offer the device, on a slightly extended scale, to the playwrights themselves. It would save them an awful lot of time if they didn't have to keep putting those same old words down on paper.



On The Notice Board . . .

. . . of the Sans Souci Guest House.

ACTION PAINTING

FORTY-THREE years have I catered exclusively for paying guests from the College of Art and there's none can say they haven't had good food, comfort and a home from home.

Like Mr. Picasso I've been through all the Periods and only once have I ever gone to the Principal about any student and that was in 1928 when Mr. Roderigo Shaughnessy took to the absinthe, came over all post-impressionist and cut off his left ear on my second best bedspread.

It wasn't me that called in the RSPCA when that Pre-Raphaelite Revivalist from Swansea kept a goat in my first-floor back for three weeks while he copied Mr. Holman Hunt. I never

raised my voice in anger all the time Sans Souci was full of surrealists giving everybody the creeps with pictures of tallboys full of snakes and armchairs with bosoms and webbed feet. Nor did I object when that Mr. Bratby and his friends spent all their waking hours painting my kitchen-sink and forever getting between me and the gas-stove.

But this action painting is more than flesh and blood can stand. I have no quarrel with anybody who puts his paint on with a brush, never mind how hideous the result may be. But I will not abide students who stand on the other side of the room and throw paint at the canvas blindfold, squirt it over their left shoulders from water-pistols or shoot little Cellophane packets of rose madder from catapults.

Maybe I wouldn't care so much if

their aim was straight but I've got more accidental action paintings over my walls than Mrs. Pollock ever had, and only yesterday I walked into my own second-floor front to change the sheets and received a handful of chrome yellow full in the face. I do not propose to run the risk of this indignity being repeated nor will I have people laying canvases down on my carpets, riding bicycles across them, setting fire to them or walking about on them like Mr. Todhunter does with bare feet dipped in emerald-green emulsion.

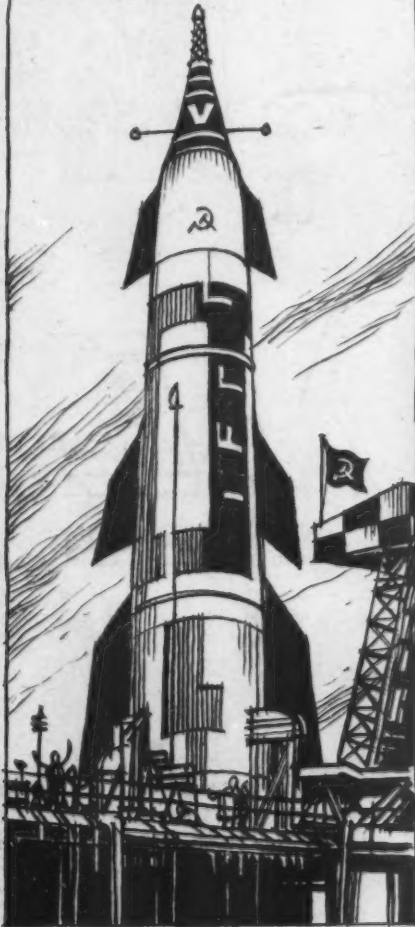
From the date of this notice action painting is forbidden within the walls of Sans Souci, and students wishing to practise any form of Tachisme must do so in the back garden. And down at the far end past my washing-line, too.

MRS. EMILIA APPELGRACE

Proprietress

THE VENUS EFFECT

ON FEB 12, 1961, RUSSIA ANNOUNCES THAT A SPACE VEHICLE IS ON ITS WAY TO VENUS



CIVILIZATION PROGRESSES UNPERTURBED

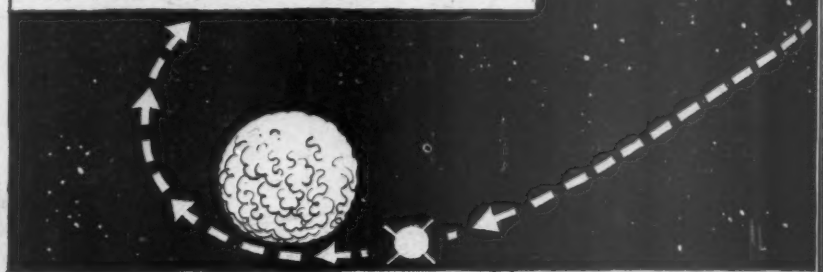


CHINA TESTS A-BOMB



US ARMS ISRAEL

IN MAY THE SPUTNIK SWINGS IN ORBIT CLOSE TO THE MYSTERIOUS PLANET OF LOVE



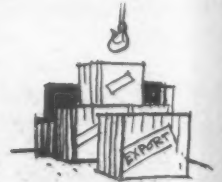
STILL CIVILIZATION MARCHES ON



RUSSIA ARMS EGYPT



LYNCH LAW IN RHODESIA



DOCK STRIKE IN LONDON

AT BERLIN SUMMIT KHRUSHCHEV ANNOUNCES RETURN AND RECOVERY OF SPUTNIK AMID SCENES OF BAFFLING AFFABILITY



SCIENCE TO THE RESCUE!

announcement from Tass makes it clear that Soviet scientists have succeeded in isolating the cause of the recent behaviour of several national leaders.

THE LOVE VIRUS

They claim that the sputnik which returned from Venus last month was contaminated with a hitherto unknown virus. This causes the patient no physical harm, but affects areas of the brain, so that the patient feels a strong sensation of "love" for the rest of mankind. So far the disease has proved incurable. It is certainly extremely contagious.

THE ORDERLY PROCESSES OF WORLD POLITICS ARE DISRUPTED



NOT ONLY POLITICIANS ARE AFFECTED



THE PENTAGON ATTEMPTS TO SEAL OFF A STRIKING FORCE AGAINST THE INFECTION — IN VAIN



EMPLOYMENT EXCHANGE



MUNITIONS FACTORIES CLOSE
LITIGATION CEASES
THOUSANDS WORKLESS



THE FUN GOES OUT
OF POLITICS



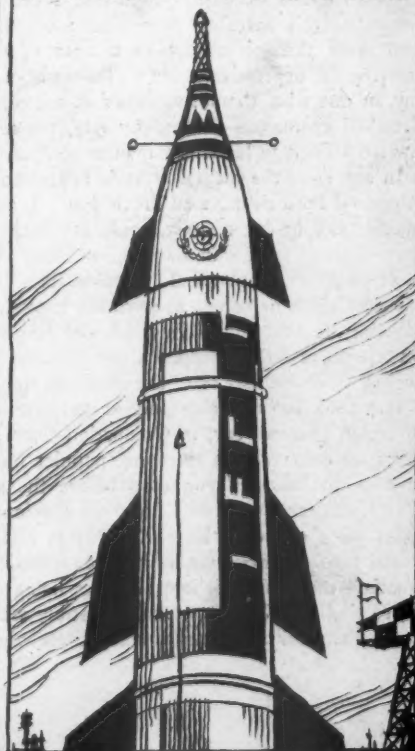
FOREIGN AID SCHEMES
PROLIFERATE



THE PROFIT MOTIVE
VANISHES

ECONOMIC CHAOS SUPERVENES

ONLY ONE THING CAN SAVE US —
A SPUTNIK TO MARS, IN THE FAINT
HOPE THAT IT WILL BECOME
CONTAMINATED WITH A HATE VIRUS





Halcyon Is As Halcyon Does

by Claud Cockburn

*Were the "good old days" before
1914 as good as they were painted?*

I—London Under Mob Law

IT may shudderingly be recalled that there was a period of time, not so long ago either, when a man could refer to his schooldays as the happiest of his life, and hardly anyone laughed or wept. It is not, I believe, known who originated this macabre proposition; whether some fellow who went through school in a state of manic euphoria, entering the depressive phase on the night of the final speech day, or one who, though wretched at school, grew still more wretched thereafter—flogged by fate, yet restrained by the law from flogging his fellow man as compensation.

In any case, the mental attitude expressed was seen to be in general both delusive and revolting. It was thus revolted against, and to-day nobody would say such a thing even as some kind of joke, sour or possibly blue. Would not, that is, say it about his personal "happiest days." But, as everyone who reads or listens to anything knows, in terms of the national life—the life of England, our England—the bizarre conception of far-off happier times remains a lively piece of dogma which we may call "the dogma of the Halcyon Days."

It would be agreeable indeed to have a shining half-sovereign (minted, say, in Coronation Year 1911), for every reference one reads in memoirs, popular history, articles or reviews, to "the halcyon days before the storm of World War I shattered, etc., etc.", or "the gracious era before the lights went out over Europe." (Most insidious are those which take the existence of that supposed golden age for granted—mentioning it in passing as being a fact known to all, so that it welds almost imperceptibly with modern folklore.) Paradoxically, innumerable people who, with one half

of their heads, believe the country "never had it so good" as now, can still find room in the other half for the imagined existence—fulfilling, apparently, some deep psychological need—of those fine days.

Teased into explaining themselves, they disclose a deep conviction that whatever else may be said, people of that period—with the possible exception of the very poor—worried less than we do; felt safer than we do; faced the future with a more serene confidence. There emerges a frieze of calm, well-integrated persons whose "standards" (so we often hear) had not been confused or debased by global convulsions. Free from the rush and strain of modern life they enjoyed a lot of leisure using it, as often as not, to pace the greensward at Hurlingham under cloudless skies or, in carefree fashion, sit on Margate pier eating oysters at sixpence a dozen.

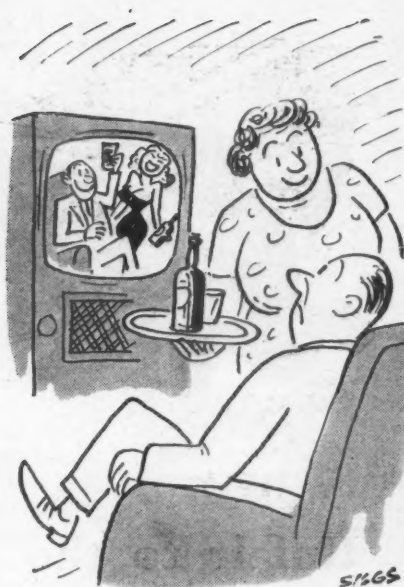
Forgetting for a moment the H-bomb, let us mingle briefly with these happy people. Meet, for instance, Mr. James Stockley, of Leeds. Though perhaps rather more than averagely articulate, he was otherwise a sufficiently typical middle-class citizen of the paradise so soon to be lost. In a letter to the *Daily Mail* of August 8, 1911, he offered a round-up of the situation as he saw it:

"Ireland within a measurable distance of civil war; dismemberment of the Empire threatened; 5,000 extra officials appointed to milk the poor wretched taxpayer; hideous postage stamps without gum; banks ruined; German sea law for the Navy; the Army, the laughing-stock of Europe; the Monarchy discredited; political jobbery that would make Tammany blush; capital and labour in a state of ferment, strikes everywhere; class against class, and creed against creed; habitual criminals released to prey upon society; raising imperial expenditure to the highest point in history, cooking the accounts of the annual revenue to hide the truth."

Whether the new postage stamps were as hideous as he thought them or so inadequately gummed is irrelevant. The point is that Stockley felt that way about them, and an annoyance like that can be as ulcerating a daily irritant as news of the Empire's dismemberment. When a man repeatedly finds the stamp skidding off the envelope under his thumb, he is more than ordinarily apt to conclude that things in general are going to the dogs.

The interesting and significant thing about Stockley is not just that he was so awfully worried, but that he was so awfully right to be that worried. He had, of course, plenty of contemporaries to point and jeer at him as an alarmist and scare-monger, painting things black with intent to discredit the Government. They too wrote letters, demonstrating that





people who talked about possible civil war in Ireland, or the German menace and the tense industrial situation were undesirables, spreading alarm and despondency. So perhaps these latter, these anti-Stockleys, were the calm happy people, back upon whose tranquil days one likes to look? Not, one is compelled to say, so. They were no less dismayed than Stockley—because they thought that all the Stockleys, and Lord Northcliffe, and the Admirals and Generals who at the time made people as nervous as the Pentagon does now, were going to prevail, with catastrophic results. The conviction gave them ulcers just as bad as Stockley's. (The student may here profitably re-read the opening chapters of Wells's *Mr. Britling Sees It Through*.)

Even if Stockley, after reading his own letter in print, had a momentary qualm lest he might have gone a bit far, such a qualm must have been brutally stilled a few days later when "London Threatened with Famine" was the headline which menaced him from his breakfast table in Leeds. The seamen had struck, then there was a strike of dockers, followed by a strike of carmen and lightermen which tied up the London docks, and then the railwaymen struck too.

Nothing, the man of 1961 reflects, so uniquely horrifying about that. And just here we walk into the middle of what is wrong with the "halcyon days" myth. For the fact is that those supposedly serene figures were thrown into a state of jitters which makes the nerve of the people of our day look quite leathery. Fifteen thousand soldiers in full battle order—bayonets and bandoliers of ball ammunition ostentatiously displayed—were rushed from Aldershot to London, where they bivouacked in Hyde Park, Regent's Park, Battersea Park, Victoria Park and on Hackney Marshes. Householders preparing for siege conditions—there was a lot of talk about the Paris Commune—bustled about the town laying in enormous food supplies, sending the price of meat up by 50 per cent in twenty-four hours.

The newspapers of that restrained period before the press fell victim to "modern sensationalism" also reacted strangely. As H. G. Wells remarked, they were "not so much published as carried screaming into the street." They could hardly have been more excited if *sansculottes* had been roaming the city with carving knives. "London Under Mob Law" was a typical headline of mid-August 1911. But when one comes to look at it one finds that what had those secure and confident people so scared was that the central strike committee on Tower Hill had hoisted a Union Jack over its headquarters—thus suggesting that it was somehow as British as the Government and the soldiery—and was actually issuing permits to milk suppliers and a wide range of other traders to pass picket-lines unmolested.

Fifty thousand people in Liverpool caused similar alarm by singing "Rule Britannia" as the police charged them. Later, troops in Liverpool opened fire, killing one man and wounding many. (But the police authorities assured the Home Secretary that there was no truth in reports that a "volley" had been fired; no volley, just shots.) The Navy was thrown into action, too. A cruiser and torpedo-boat went up the Mersey, flashing searchlights at the town all night, and in the morning dispatching a tug on whose upper deck "could be seen," an anxious reporter noted with satisfaction "Maxim guns shining in the sunlight, while bluejackets carried rifles with fixed bayonets."

Stirring times, mind you; but how, one would very much like to know, did they ever get the reputation for being halcyon? Mr. Stockley certainly took no such view of them, and following events from bad to worse we shall note that the faces of people much nearer the top than he were even more drawn with what—despite the myth—we may venture to describe as *Angst*.

Next week: Gossip Writers Were Just As Bad



Unfair to the Moon

CHRISTOPHER HOLLIS distrusts these new-fangled scientists

THE poor moon has not been having much of a press these past months. Times are indeed changed since those happy mediaeval heretics who taught that the moon was a much more important body than the sun, because the moon shone at night whereas the sun shone only during the day when it was light anyway. A peculiar sort of juvenile delinquents, known as nuclear scientists, is shooting things at its face, while another school of thought has started darkly to whisper that its backside is by no means all that it has been generally cracked up to be. A schoolboy, ordered to recite the *Ancient Mariner*, has boldly proclaimed

All in a hot and copper sky

The bloody sun at noon,

Right up above the mast did stand,

And so did the bloody moon.

All that being so, I, as a lifelong lunaphil, am therefore very glad that it has apparently been found possible to send messages to Australia via the moon more cheaply than it is possible to send them via any of the satellites. Whatever makes a satellite look silly is OK by me, but at the same time I do wish that I could understand the object of this exercise. It seems that the only message which it is possible to send to Australia in this peculiar manner is one and unvarying—to the effect that “the quick brown fox jumps over the moon”

—an assertion in itself, I would have thought, neither verifiable, interesting nor inherently probable.

“This demonstration,” says Sir Bernard Lovell, of Jodrell Bank, “is important because it illustrates that communication via the moon can be made between any two points on the earth’s surface and that the only equipment needed is terminal equipment.”

There was a boy in our village school who alleged that he could send an electric current all round the world so that it would come back and give a shock to the headmaster. Whether or not the current went round the world it certainly finished up by giving a shock to the headmaster, and the boy finished up by getting six of the best on the seat of his trousers, he, too, thus discovering that the only equipment essentially required by the operation was what Sir Bernard had so felicitously described as “terminal equipment.”

But what is the reason why this “moon service” is only capable of conveying one message? It seems—is there no end to the marvels of science?—that Professor Colin Cherry, of the Electrical Engineering Department of Imperial College, London, has been conducting an inquiry to decide why two ears are better than one. The rough conclusion is that what only goes in at one ear very easily comes out at

the other, but, if it goes in at both ears at the same time, then it gets clogged up in the middle and one really hardly has any alternative but to pay some attention to it. Therefore, concludes Professor Cherry, if you happen to have two ears it is as well to take both of them along when you go to a cocktail party. (Why a cocktail party in particular I cannot imagine but that is what the Professor says. Who am I to laugh at science?) It is much easier, adds the Professor, to hear what is said to you if you are familiar with it already. I am sure that he is right there, and it is this principle which applies to relaying your messages through the man-in-the-moon. The message does get through but it gets through in so faint a form that it is only possible to pick it up if you know what it is going to be already. Hence all this backchat about the quick brown fox jumping over the moon.

Now all that is in itself as clear as mud, but what the layman would think is that it means that there is no great practical importance in the operation. It may mean that it is cheaper to relay your message through the moon than through a satellite, but then it is cheaper still just to pick up the receiver and call Australia direct. It may be added, for what it may be worth, that if one does that, then one can tell the Australians not only about the quick brown fox jumping over the moon, which they must by now know already, but all sorts of other interesting and improbable things as well.

It is recorded of Lord Baldwin that, when he was Prime Minister, the room next to him in the House of Commons was occupied by a very loud-voiced colleague. One day, hearing a tremendous noise, the Prime Minister inquired what was going on. He was told that it was Ernest Brown talking to Birmingham and he replied “Tell him to use the telephone.” I am sure that I am wrong and I am the last person in the world to wish the moon to be left out of any fun that is going, but I should have thought that that was the simplest way of communicating also with Australia.

☆

“If floor heating is not enough, an open fire, designed to harbour the TV, is one of the numerous options.”—*Ideal Home*
An inspiration.

Smoke (and Paper) Control

By H. F. ELLIS

THE Clean Air Act is gradually spreading its beneficent and smutless tentacles over our polluted country. Smokeless zones are still rare (though Coventry and Manchester led the way in the early 'fifties), since a smokeless zone means what it says and within its pure boundaries no smoke at all may be emitted; no furnace, no factory, no railway engine, no ship, no road-surfacing machine may pour out its accustomed contribution of tar, grit, cinders, dust and sulphur dioxide gas. It takes time to stop railway engines smoking. Hence the introduction of the less whole-hearted, intermediate stage Smoke Control Areas, where the production of smoke is prohibited unless a special exemption has been granted.

The Act leaves to local authorities the initiative in setting up Smoke Control Areas, which adequately explains why there are not more of them about. But now and again some Council bestirs itself, shakes itself free of the soot that has been accumulating on its broad shoulders for the past hundred years, and sets to work. It outlines the proposed Area on its local maps. It ascertains, if it has its wits about it, that there will be enough smokeless fuel available to meet the demand and then, having obtained the general approval of the Minister of Housing, begins to warn all concerned, by means of pamphlets and house-to-house visits, that the old flickering firelight days are drawing to an end. Finally it makes an Order, to come into force not less than six months after it has been approved and confirmed by the Minister.

The Metropolitan Borough of Wandsworth, always enterprising and go-ahead, was not the borough to sit idly by until its ratepayers were entirely lost beneath a layer of oleaginous grime, so that I am in a position to tell less fortunate citizens what happens next. Millions who still crouch nightly beside their open coal fires, beset by the fear that their local authority may one day forcibly rid them of the pall of filth they have learned to love and cherish, may

find that knowledge robs the future of some of its terrors. The metamorphosis, when it comes, may be momentarily painful, but then you can't make butterflies without breaking chrysalises.

The story of my Open Firelighter (Gas), more usually referred to simply as "the works," puts the procedure in a coconut shell.

It was some time, as I recall, in the late autumn of 1959, when the firelight traced shifting patterns on the walls and sought vainly to cast glowing reflections in the smoke-grimed windows, that a man from the Council called and said that the fireplace would be OK for the smokeless without adaptation. We should need, however, a gas poker, the use of paper, sticks or proprietary lighters being forbidden under the Act, and not much go with coke either. The Council would come up with seventy per cent of the cost.

"Right," we said, and added that it wouldn't be so cheerful of course.

He had the look of a man who had heard that particular moan from upwards of three thousand householders already.

On February 12 1960, the Council sent me a letter, signed by the Town Clerk's own facsimile hand, informing me that the Metropolitan Borough of Wandsworth (No. 2) Smoke Control Order 1959 had been confirmed by the Minister of Housing and Local Government, and that after September 1 1960 it would be a punishable offence to emit smoke from my chimney. The letter requested me to "note carefully that no works of adaptation to fireplaces can attract grant unless undertaken with the Council's written approval and the expenditure incurred before 1st September 1960."

We desired our gas poker to attract



"Where the hell've you been?"



grant. I accordingly, on some unrecorded date in the spring of the year, rang up the Gas Board and requested and required them to come and install the implement, and in due course a man arrived and measured the distance between the nearest (sealed-off) gas pipe and our open fireplace. This worked out at about three feet, and the man took the view that the installation could be carried out without great difficulty. This encouraged us.

On July 18 I received a very full and helpful letter from the Gas Board which read in part:

"Further to your enquiry, * I enclose

* This enquiry of mine seems to be missing from the file, but at a guess its general purport must have been to ask when in God's name they were going to fix the firelighter.

an estimate for work that you require carried out in connection with the Clean Air Act.

The details must be copied on the Form TC96 already sent to you by the Wandsworth Borough Council, and the Form TC96 and Estimate forwarded by you to the Medical Officer of Health, Municipal Buildings, Wandsworth.

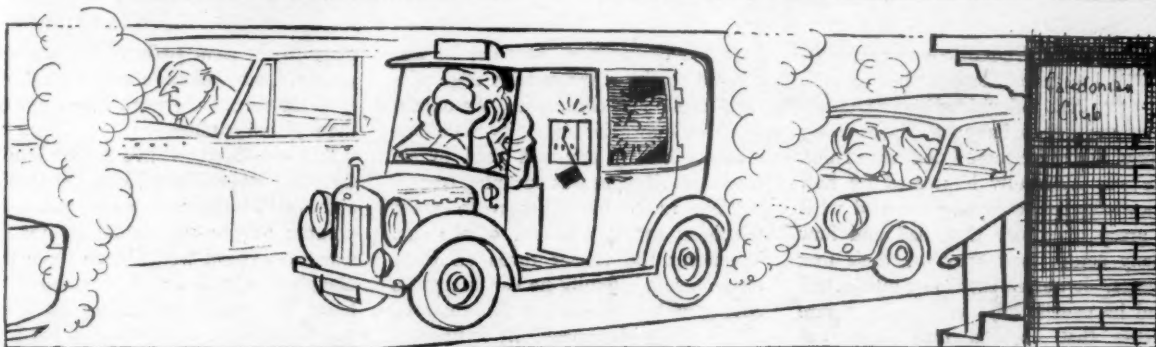
After consideration of your application you will receive from the Borough Council a form giving you details of the amount of grant payable by the Borough Council, and the balance will be payable by you. Form CA/AG will also be enclosed, for payment of the grant upon completion of the work.

When you receive these forms, if you will . . . communicate with us, we shall be pleased to assist you with the necessary arrangements for the work to be carried out.

Payment for the work can be arranged as follows:—

Upon signing an agreement form with us, the amount of grant payable by the Borough Council . . .

It will perhaps be as well to break off there for fear of confusing readers with little or no experience of Smoke Control Areas. The letter struck me as on the whole clear and well put—in particular, the phrase "to assist you with the necessary arrangements for the work to be carried out" being much more suggestive of the length of flexible tubing required than some such sloppy expression as "fix the lighter" or "do the job." The one point that gave me a moment's concern was that Form TC96



Brookbank

had *not* already been sent to me by Wandsworth Borough Council, but this defect was, it is clear, speedily remedied, for as early as August 4 I was in a position to complete and despatch to the Council Form TC96, together with Estimate No. 428518 (Supply and fix one Open Firelighter—£1 7s. 6d.). There was now a good chance, if we all pulled together and did our bit, that the gas poker would be in by Michaelmas.

On the 10th of August the Borough authorized "the works," in a notable document stating that "these works may be considered as approved and accordingly may now be proceeded with" and warning me that a firm order should be placed for the works to be

put in hand immediately as the grant (estimated at "about 19s. 3d.") could not be given if the expenditure were incurred after August 31. "In cases of hardship," they added, "the Council will consider increasing the amount of the grant," and they enclosed a form—the aptly named CA/AG—"upon which you may make application for the Council's grant when the works have been completed and are ready for the Council's inspection."

The tempo of the operation now, with the rapid approach of the dreaded September 1, sensibly heightened. On August 13 I forwarded the Council's Authorization for the Works to the Gas Board, together with the Board's Estimate No. 428518, duly signed, and a

covering letter in which, I am sorry to see, occurred the somewhat intemperate passage "Goodness knows I have documents and forms to spare. All I want now is a gas poker." On August 15 the Board replied excitedly that they had "arranged for the Open Firelighter to be fixed on Thursday the 18th August and trust this will be convenient." But it turned out *not* to be—or so I judge from the fact that nobody came. Negotiations were resumed, with the result that before ever the autumnal equinox was upon us a van arrived and dumped the poker in the hall. It was not a poker really, more of a bracket with innumerable holes designed to slip right under the grate, but as far as we were concerned

it was the works. The man who brought it said that the fitter would be along in next to no time.

There is at this stage a regrettable hiatus in my records. I have no note of the date on which the fitter arrived and complained, with justice, that the flexible tubing supplied was too short to reach the fire; nor of the delivery of the longer flex; nor even of the actual completion of what might be called the necessary arrangements for the work to be carried out. But carried out it was, and all that remained was for me to fill in Form CA/AG, certifying that the works had been completed and were ready for inspection by the Council's representative. This form had naturally

to be accompanied by proof of expenditure, in the shape of a receipted account from the Gas Board, and it so happened that before this account could be prepared, much less paid, I was obliged, early in November, to spend some weeks abroad. I blame myself, therefore, for the fact that 1961 had dawned before the inspection of the works could be carried out. All the same, I do not understand why the inspection, when it came, should have been so cursory. A mere turn of the head in the direction of my Open Firelighter seemed to me unworthy of the penultimate act in a drama that had lasted, from first to last, for a matter of fifteen months.

The Borough Treasurer's cheque for 19s. 3d. reached me on January 20 1961, and in case anyone unfamiliar with Smoke Control Areas should think the whole affair rather a to-do about nothing, allow me to quote the concluding paragraph of the letter from the Town Clerk that (among other documents) accompanied it. "Payment of the grant," he wrote, "has been made on the understanding that you will retain these accounts and supporting vouchers for a period of at least two years from the date of this letter in case they are required by the District Auditor."

I shall be closing the file, then, on or after the 19th January, 1963.

Unhappy Families

By R. G. G. PRICE

HENRY FORBES was an inconspicuous desk-worker in the BBC Television Drama Department and if there happens to be anybody else of that name there I don't mean him. He was frightfully impressed by how knowledgeable everyone was and what a grasp of theory they had and how many actors they knew by their first names. It was all extremely intellectual and he usually kept very quiet, a rare virtue that ensured him small but

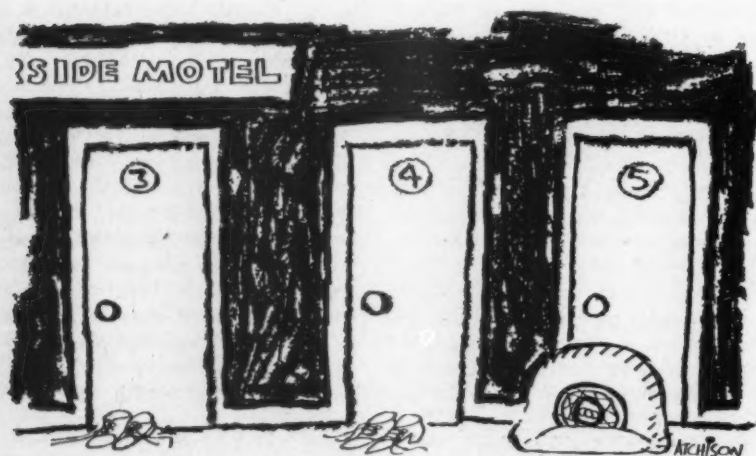
attractive promotions. One day he was allowed to sit on the outside edge of a high-level policy conference. An official who was known for his ability to do four men's work by day and read in six languages all night was outlining trends.

"We really have begun to make television drama a mirror of the age. Whenever the viewer turns on these days he sees a family he can recognize coping with problems just like those he has to cope with himself. By setting our

plays in different parts of the country we show how lifelike the provinces are and also spread the work nicely among the regional studios.

"In the Department's model family there is Father who is too old at thirty-eight and Mother who is neurotic and a chronic nagger and is falling for an expense-account wolf. Then there is a Daughter who is either pregnant or is being deterred from taking up some worthwhile career by shame at the idea of having to invite college friends home and reveal they have high tea instead of dinner. There is a Son who has fallen in with a fast set and fiddles the books in his first job to pay for rounds of trebles at a co-respondents' local. Both parent's Parents live in the only bedroom and are senile whatever the age of the householder. As the various conflicts are fought out, one after another of the family slips off to consult the Marriage Guidance Council or the Priest or the Psychologist. For the first time in history the Ordinary Man is seeing himself face to face."

It seemed that somebody was expected to say something and, as the most inconsiderable of the audience, Henry Forbes tried to help by observing, "I expect it is very lifelike and just how you find your own neighbours, sir."





"Excuse me, Rector, there's a point I'd like a ruling on."

"Well of course I'm not talking about people like Us," said the chairman of the conference with an irritable wave that seemed to include vast numbers of Londoners. "I'm talking about people like Them, the viewers, not the tele-visers. I happen to live in a flat with an ex-wife and go out to meals and stay in to concerts. I'm talking about Life in general." As Henry looked a little puzzled, he added patronizingly, "You don't agree?"

"But would families that are so busy being wrecked by conflicts have time to look in?" he asked. "According to the figures that's what lots of families do."

"Happy families look in; unhappy families are looked in at," an Echo in a duffel waistcoat explained.

"After saying happy families are all alike," Henry objected, "Tolstoy said, 'every unhappy family is unhappy in its own way.' So many of the families our dramatists write about are unhappy in the same way. Apart from superficial

differences, they are the same family."

"Of course they are," said the chairman triumphantly, "that's what I've been claiming. They are Mr. and Mrs. Average, the Norms, the Family Next Door."

"But next door to whom?" Henry inquired, growing bolder because this point had often worried him. "I have moved fairly often in my life but I have never lived next door to people faintly like these. You don't read about them in the papers. You don't meet them in autobiographies or at the houses of friends or on juries. You don't see them on the screen doing a piece of mime on *What's My Line?* or being interviewed in the street in *Tonight*. What are your neighbours like?" he asked, turning to a messenger who had just brought in some files.

"One side of us there's a postman who was a Labour candidate in the last election and plays the viola in the local orchestra. He's married to a girl who

teaches physics at the big new school at the back. The other side is old Mr. Pettigrew who was shot down trying to stop the Islington Mob make their getaway. He's mad about pigeons and Red Indians. Can't stump him, you can't, on the history of all the tribes."

"Very deviant," said the Echo coldly.

"My neighbours," said Henry, "are a widow, who had papered a room completely with eighteenth-century anatomical prints. Her daughter is a vet, a Liberal borough councillor, and is engaged to a man who designs cartons for pies. They are saving to be married and have just bought an enormous dog. On the other side is a bus driver married to a girl cricketer. Their marriage is splitting up, not because he hasn't been made an inspector or because his parents live with them, but because he is out every night taking economics courses."

"I hardly think you live in a normal environment," said the chairman irritably.

Henry lived on a housing estate but hardly liked to say so. He thought about the story in the paper that morning about the housewife who organized a five-mile protest march against the destruction of a bird sanctuary and the story about the woman who kept her children in the bath and the story about the schoolboy who had published original research in astronomy.

The chairman, who was getting tired of Henry's expression, said coldly, "The television drama family is statistically valid. That is what the majority of families would be like boiled down, as it were."

And the conference moved on to discuss the choice of an actor to play a comic uncle. It was thought he'd need a big moustache and references to the old fire-watching days in his dialogue.

☆

Answer "Yes" or "No"

"Mr. Fellowes, to Detective-Superintendent Millington—Are you quite satisfied that the deceased misbehaved himself in the club?—Quite satisfied.

Did he use abusive and obscene language?—It was used by a party of which he was a member.

Were threats used by him?—Threats were used.

Is it right that the proprietor of the club was viciously attacked and injured?—That is quite correct.

In the press it has been broadcast that the dead man was acting as peacemaker. Would you agree with that?—No, I would not agree."—*The Times*



"No, no, you've got it wrong; the dog's name is Topsy and mine is Lady Fiona ffynge-Ffolliott."

Ghosts

Census information in the United States reveals that there are now no inhabitants in the cities of Ophir, Peacock, Eureka and Torino.

GONE is the gold they gloried in at Ophir,
Pale and apocryphal is Peacock's pride,
Nothing can be found now in all Eureka
And Torino's matadors have long since died.

Once upon a time there was gold in Ophir,
Plentiful and pure in the surrounding rocks.
The dance-hall dames had twenty-carat hatpins,
The wives had nuggets in the pockets of their frocks.
They ballasted their saddles with the rich red dust,
And the banks had barrels of the stuff on trust,
But they wagered it and wasted it and took to paying taxes,
And the gold of Ophir went to fill Fort Knox.

Dandified and dainty were the Peacock people,
Scented and splendid were the clothes they wore;
They preened and paraded in the Texan sunlight,
The soberest of citizens had suits by the score.
The men stepped out with an exaggerated gait
Noticeable even in the Lone Star State:
But pride could not preserve them as a substitute for progress,
And Peacock's citizens are proud no more.

Talented and fertile were the people of Eureka,
Varied in invention and ingenious of bent.
The whole town hummed with a multitude of gadgets,
They had every apparatus that a person could invent.
They thought up thousands of unhandelled ways
Of living and of loving and of lengthening their days,
Till the age of science triumphed over native ingenuity
And Eureka's talents went the way the pride of Peacock went.

Huge were the horns of the bulls of Torino,
Savage was their habit and as satin was their hide;
Their bellowing fell heavy on the sultry air of summer
As they drove them into market from the quiet countryside.
The bullrings echoed to the deep-voiced shouts
Of tense Torino citizens attending at the bouts:
But Chicago wanted Shorthorns and the bulls have been forgotten
With Eureka's ingenuity and Peacock's pride.

Gone is the gold they gloried in at Ophir,
Pale and apocryphal is Peacock's pride,
Nothing can be found now in all Eureka
And Torino's matadors have long since died.

— P. M. HUBBARD

Essence of Parliament

THE trouble about the Defence debate was the noises off. For the Socialists Mr. Healey made quite a good speech from his point of view—a good deal less of a University Extension lecture than usual—and Mr. Crossman made quite a good speech from his point of view. They were careful not verbally to clash and Mr. Crossman even went out of his way to congratulate Mr. Mayhew. But with the alarms upstairs it was not possible to take very seriously Mr. Healey's claim that he spoke for a united party. The Conservatives were not in much better shape. From their Front Bench Mr. Watkinson and Mr. Amery spoke for the independent nuclear deterrent and Mr. Amery with a splendidly rehearsed spontaneous gesture pointed a finger of withering scorn at the place where Mr. Gaitskell would have been sitting had he been sitting anywhere. Unfortunately it was *vox et praeterea nihil*, for Mr. Gaitskell, unable to take any more of it, had gone out to have one. Mr. Amery jeered at Mr. Gaitskell for running away from his previous position when he had advocated the independent nuclear deterrent in order that we might talk more frankly to the Americans. But it hardly lies in Conservative mouths, whether of Suez or not of Suez, to jeer at people for running away from previous defence positions, and Mr. Amery laid both his present self and the Mr. Gaitskell of the previous incarnation open to the devastating retort from Mr. Grimond that they advocated the deterrent not in order to frighten our enemies but in order to impress our friends. There was a good deal of satire from both Conservative Front Benchers about pacifists sitting on the pavement in Red Square and about those spineless ones who prefer death to liberty. But while it is very legitimate at times to use satire rather than argument it is important not to satirize your opponents for faults for which everybody else is satirizing you. And the trouble with the Treasury Bench is that it may paint itself as a bench of brave men who are daring to defend their country, but in everybody else's eyes the charge against them is that the

Some Aspects of Defence

Russians are prepared to use against us all methods short of total war and the Government in their anxiety to defend us against the total war which probably is not coming have rendered us incapable of defending ourselves against the dangers which manifestly are besetting us. We might be unable to defend ourselves under the Socialists. We are manifestly unable to defend ourselves under the Conservatives. Mr. George Brown and Mr. Crossman, agreeing perhaps in nothing else, agreed in describing Mr. Amery's speech as "puerile." It was a harsh term, but at least it is certain that neither he nor Mr. Watkinson succeeded in convincing their supporters—let alone their opponents. It was Mr. Watkinson's argument that we have a good hope of attaining the recruiting figures that are necessary for our military commitments. The

House listened to him saying his piece with reasonable politeness, but few subsequent Conservative speakers were so eccentric as to make any pretence of believing what he had said. It was manifestly simply an act that he was going through. The Bow boys are coming with their demand for selective service, and the subsequent debate showed that they had a formidably various array of support on the Conservative back benches—Mr. Aubrey Jones, Mr. Paul Williams, Mr. Birch, Lord Lambton, Mr. Harrison, Mr. Wingfield Digby. It is an oddity which we are inclined to forget that it was the Socialists who gave us the nuclear deterrent and the Conservatives who abolished conscription. Brigadier Prior-Palmer thought it a pity that Brigadier Maclean was so rude about the Army. But what would you have? Brigadiers are rude. Colonel Wigg, that splendid man, as always spoke splendidly. Here is a man who really loves the British Army.

More Aspects of Defence

I do not know that Thursday found anyone to love the British Navy. It is a sad comedown for it these days.

The second day of the Defence debate was ushered in by a curtain raiser as splendid and as absurd as any that Westminster can ever have witnessed. With an ineptitude so sublime as to be almost, one could but think, divinely inspired Mr. Woodrow Wyatt insisted on introducing from the Socialist benches a bill to raise the level of surtax. The other Socialists were all hopping mad while Mr. Wyatt was speaking and hopped yet more madly when, instead of one of themselves, Mr. Nabarro was called upon to oppose Mr. Wyatt. Mr. Nabarro was in his best and most mischievous form—insulted Mr. Gaitskell—referred to Mr. Wyatt as the leader of the Leicestershire miners. At the end of it all Mr. Wyatt could not even get a teller to count the non-existent votes in his favour and sat miserably on the benches with a colleague on each side ostentatiously turning a back to him and speaking no word whether of comfort, consolation or derision. As Abraham Lincoln might have said "Some Socialists annoy all of their colleagues some of the time and some Socialists annoy some of their colleagues all of the time, but Mr. Wyatt alone annoys all of his colleagues all of the time." Mr. Gaitskell, sitting on the Front Bench, did a passable imitation of Queen Victoria and was not amused.

Mr. Fell was on the warpath on Thursday. Would there be a right-wing Tory revolt? He rebuked Mr. Duncan Sandys for his harsh words about Sir Roy Welensky. Mr. Sandys

had been "tilting at windmills." Then after questions Mr. Fell tried to adjourn the House to call attention to the Luluabour massacres, but when the Speaker refused to accept his motion, he subsided in silence and with surprising meekness. It would not have ended thus had Mr. Silverman been a right-wing Tory. The rest of the early part of Thursday's business was taken up with Labour's protests against the Government's plan to put a time-table on to the Health Bill. This is the sort of proposal that every Government makes and every Opposition opposes. Proposals and protests hardly vary from one another by a syllable, from Parliament to Parliament, irrespective of which party is Government and which party is Opposition. Experienced Parliamentarians could make the speeches which such occasions require in their sleep. Indeed, looking down from the press gallery, one had to wonder whether Mr. Butler was not doing so. The only difficulty is for the actors in this farce to keep a straight face. Mr. Gaitskell managed this. Mr. Butler on the other hand didn't really try.

—PERCY SOMERSET



MR. RICHARD CROSSMAN



Millions for Roads

IT is not often that the investment-bent inquirer obtains valuable hints from that secluded haunt of academic learning, the *London and Cambridge Economic Bulletin*. In this respect the latest issue which appears in *The Times Review of Industry* breaks new ground, and heavy ground at that, by an interesting projection of the expenditure on roads in Great Britain in the years ahead.

A most ambitious and also optimistic estimate is made of that expenditure in the decade 1960-1970. The grand total required for this period will lie somewhere between £3,100 million and £3,700 million, which is astronomic at either end.

The annual expenditure will be climbing steadily. In the financial year now coming to an end it amounted to a mere £188 million, of which £77 million was for the construction of new roads, £82 million for widening and minor improvements, and the balance of £29 million for administration and other miscellaneous items. In the coming year the rate of acceleration will still be modest—a rise to a mere £200 million. But from then onwards the foot is likely to be pressed on the throttle and by the year 1969-1970 the total expenditure is expected to amount to £515 million, of which £315 million will represent investment in new roads, £120 million for maintenance and minor improvements and £80 million on miscellaneous charges.

All these estimates are based on agreed road plans. They are calculated on present prices and costs. What the actual outlay will be depends on how far we shall have been carried farther along the primrose path of inflation during the next ten years.

These are very large sums but not too large in relation to the dire need

for more roads and to the disgraceful neglect of road construction in the past. Even this programme will leave Britain a long way behind its European neighbours who to-day enjoy a tremendous economic advantage in the speed with which their goods traffic can and does move along their autobahns, routes nationales and autostrades.

These estimates bring with them the assurance that the firms involved in this road programme are likely to be kept increasingly busy in the years to come. The major part of the work will no doubt be tackled by the large firms of public works contractors, of whom John Laing, Taylor Woodrow, Richard Costain are shining examples.

The manufacturers of road-making materials and above all the big cement groups will be hard at it coping with this demand. Associated Cements, Eastwoods, Rugby Portland Cement, and London Brick are all promising shares, quite apart from the additional work which the steadily increasing

expenditure on the roads will bring them. Then there are the manufacturers of road-making and surfacing materials, among whom let mention be made of Val de Travers, Tarmac, Neuchatel, and Limmer & Trinidad.

Other participants in the road boom will be the manufacturers of road-making equipment, among them Ruston & Hornby and Vickers.

Finally for an investment in the lorries that will be humming along the new roads what could be better than Leyland Motors and ACV—the last named a company which is being financially and technically streamlined.

These shares would make a coherent and interestingly intertwined portfolio. They could form the basis of a Road Unit Trust. Indeed why not "RUT"? Here is a suggestion offered gratis from Lombard Lane to any of the established unit trust groups. It would certainly represent a stake in one of the surest bets among the growth industries in Britain.

— LOMBARD LANE

In the Country



Overloading the River

THERE'S a thin film of silt still staining the carpet and the marks of a flood a foot up the wall. This winter has seen the worst floods in the West country for over a century. Towns like Tiverton and Frome have been inundated. Exeter has been cut off.

But though roads and railway culverts have been washed away this year, it is not because it has rained more heavily than in previous years. I have come to this conclusion after doing a little research on my own farm.

About ten years ago I built a footbridge across a small stream in the valley. It stood at least five feet above the water. Yet last week after only

twenty-four hours' rain the bridge was washed down to the sea. I went down to inspect the damage and was amazed to see how *quickly* the small stream had risen. It was running red with soil. Walking back to my farm I realized that I had not bothered to put wellingtons on because the fields between the stream and my farm were no longer as marshy as they used to be. I realized then that the two facts were connected.

The reason why my footbridge had been washed away was because I had been encouraged by the Ministry of Agriculture to drain the moors and had laid miles of field pipes beneath them. Consequently heavy rainfall now gets carried to the streams within an hour or two of falling. Whereas before these so-called improvements were made, the rainfall lay on the land and had a chance to evaporate or be absorbed by the soil.

In the towns, the flood damage has been caused by the same kind of concrete improvements. The roads may be dry and less muddy because of the concrete drainage schemes but the water has to go somewhere. What it does do now is to run along the highway and put up the level of the rivers beyond their natural capacity.

And to add to my difficulties in the country, when I called the fire engine out I was told that they are not equipped to pump water out, only to pump it in.

— RONALD DUNCAN



"Look who's back!"

VOICES OF SPRING



"Where did you plant those bulbs, Mabel?"



"I'm afraid I can't cut the grass until the daffodils have died off."



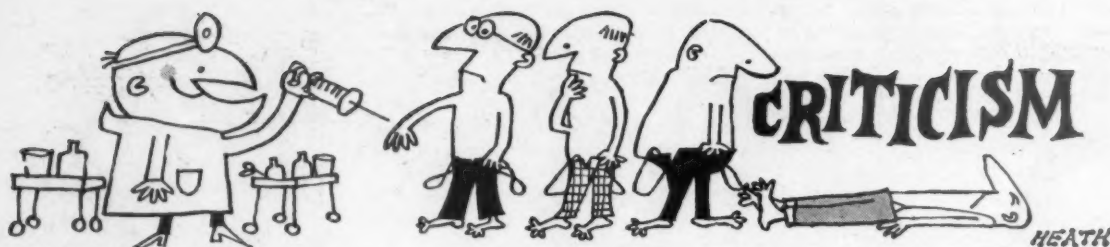
"But darling, I need you!"



"Cuckoo! Cuckoo!"



"It's hopeless! Now he thinks we found him in the airing cupboard."



AT THE PLAY

King Kong (PRINCES)
The Three Caskets (PLAYERS')

THE world of entertainment has thrived so long on derivations from African rhythms that it is fitting the parent country should now send us a jazz musical of its own. *King Kong* cannot be judged by American standards. A Broadway producer could have made it a lot slicker, but in doing so he would probably have destroyed its naïve charms. In its clumsy construction it is almost amateur. The story of a boxer who runs up against a gang and murders his girl is very disconnected, and the linking scenes with gossiping washerwomen should have been unnecessary. An added difficulty is the language, often very hard to understand in spite of a glossary in the programme.

But much in its favour is a spontaneity seldom to be found in more polished

monster musicals. This is the Africa of the shanty-towns near Johannesburg, ruled by crude gangsters and living in sociable poverty. The large crowd which forms the chorus is the most interesting thing here. It is much more natural than any Western crowd, and its rhythms appear part of its normal existence. Most of them are writhingly erotic, but some stem from tribal war dances. These actors, who have come from similar townships, have them in their bones. Their laughter is a wonderfully infectious sound; *en fête* they have without effort the abandon we can only muster at Hampstead Heath on a Bank Holiday or at the wakes at Blackpool.

The best songs are a roadmenders' chant, accompanied by swinging pickaxes, and a wedding hymn beautifully sung in slow time. When the music is uncorruptedly African it is much more effective than when it follows rather dully the models of American jazz. At

REP SELECTION

Playhouse, Derby, *Arms and the Man*, until March 18.
Theatre Royal, Lincoln, *The Boy Friend*, until March 11.
Leatherhead Theatre, *The French Mistress*, until March 11.
Colchester Rep, *The More the Merrier*, until March 11.

times the décor is garish, but some of the crowd's colour-schemes are splendid. The company is ably led by Nathan Middledle, who makes the boxer a commanding figure, by Peggy Phango as a speakeasy queen, and by Joe Mogotsi as a very unpleasant gangster. Surprisingly, none of them has a really striking voice. But the bigger surprise of the evening was the dying fall with which it ends, a small boy playing plaintively on a penny whistle. Very different from the cascades of massed noise to which we are accustomed, and infinitely more artistic.

Going to a first night at the Players' is like intruding on the private jokes of a devoted family. It is not so much that the audience, beer mug in hand, is easily pleased as that it expects a flow of puns wrapped up in doggerel couplets plus a note of mild satire on the dramatic Establishment. In *The Three Caskets*, an operetta based on Portia's extraordinary method of choosing a husband, this note is so mild that it frequently fades out altogether, leaving us in a trough of Novelloish sentiment. But the production is lightly and gaily mounted, and those who like this sort of thing will have the added pleasure of finding singing voices that fill the house without a microphone.

Portia Browne is an heiress living comfortably in Belmont Square, S.W.1, with her aged butler and her two maids Nerina and Clarissa; she is so eager to be married that her insistence on the casket test seemed to confirm my suspicion that her IQ was abnormally low, even for Belmont Square. Her first suitor is an Irish lord with every cliché of the stage shamrock in his mouth, and her second a black coon from Dixieland whom Robin Hunter makes by far the most engaging character. Both failing, a



King Kong—NATHAN MIDDLE

(*King Kong*)

gallant Grenadier arrives inflating his scarlet chest and longing to die for the Queen. The only twist in the perilously slight plot is that Portia's maids conspire for their own purposes to steer him away from the lead casket, but in the end of course true love has its way. I thought it a pity that straight romance should smother the burlesque that was only now and then allowed to rear its head. In the handling of the lead casket at the beginning there was promise of a much funnier evening than we had.

Peter Greenwell's music, played by an orchestra, is bright, and Gordon Snell's lyrics are very much to the Players' pattern. Reginald Woolley's decorations are charming, and the production, by Don Gemmell and Peter Greenwell, gets the maximum from the tiny stage. As Portia, Margaret Burton has a fine voice, and so have Denis Martin and Laurie Payne as the Irishman and the Guardsman, but Robin Hunter's coon and Patsy Rowland's Nerina have the sharpest edge.

Recommended

(Dates in brackets refer to *Punch* reviews)

The Devils (Aldwych, in repertory—1/3/61), John Whiting from Aldous Huxley. *The Changeling* (Royal Court—1/3/61), Jacobean gem very intelligently unearthed. *The Caretaker* (Duchess—11/5/60), Harold Pinter's successful avant-garde play. —ERIC KEOWN

AT THE PICTURES

The Facts of Life *So Close to Life*

THE stars are skilled comedy performers, but it is the cunning direction of an ingenious script that makes *The Facts of Life* (Director: Melvin Frank) so enjoyably funny. Nevertheless it's also true that these stars, Bob Hope and Lucille Ball, are exactly right for this comedy because, among other things, of their great experience in the exact and precise timing of laughs in more obvious shows on a very much smaller scale. Well, let's come right out and say TV.

Not that this is at all elaborate. Basically, it's about marital infidelity, the stuff of innumerable wearisome artificial farces; and the story, the mere succession of incidents, would seem like nothing in a summary. But it is planned, constructed, written (by Norman Panama and the director), directed and played so that every tiniest detail makes the utmost comic effect because of its placing and timing. It gave me more genuine relaxed laughter than ten farces about funny little men who have misadventures interspersed with dialogue laboriously contrived to remind one, in superficially unexceptionable language, of well-known dirty jokes. Can you hear me, Wardour Street?

Various accidents leave a wife (Miss Ball) and her best friend's husband (Mr. Hope) as the only active members of



[*The Facts of Life*]

Kitty Weaver—LUCILLE BALL

Larry Gilbert—BOB HOPE

what was arranged as a party of six holidaying together in Acapulco. They don't like each other much; one or two very amusing early scenes have shown us why. Unenthusiastically, they take out a fishing launch, and what sparks mutual attraction is a wild and successful struggle together to land a giant marlin. After the holiday they conscientiously try to get back to normal, but they are in the same local set, their paths often cross, they are tempted into deliberate meetings and a kiss or two, and at last they find themselves spending a few days together and considering divorce. Unexpected discomfort and a sudden quarrel make them think again, and all ends both happily and dutifully.

That bald outline might be the basis of a quite serious story. What fills it out with fun is the detail, and the beautiful precision with which it is planted. Ordinary moments of embarrassment or annoyance, the simplest actions and flashes of vision or sound—all these can spring involuntary laughter when each comes at the right second, in the right place, is shown to us just when the right mood has been built up for it and cut quickly when it has made its effect. The instant or two of bafflement till they find each has the other's glasses; the uneasy telephone-call taken in conference; his dogged substitution of another each time she tearfully reaches for the handkerchief in his breast-pocket... There are dozens of moments like this that perfect timing and placing make extremely funny. Plenty of the dialogue is funny, too, without being

mechanical or out of character. Mr. Hope is remarkably convincing, Miss Ball is irresistible, nobody could play these parts better, but the whole thing is above all an object-lesson in comedy writing and direction.

So Close to Life (Director: Ingmar Bergman) is set in a maternity hospital and is very impressive and affecting indeed. The three young women sharing a ward exemplify three profoundly different attitudes to motherhood. One (Ingrid Thulin) is miserable, does not want her child because she feels that her husband does not want it, has a miscarriage, and while recovering watches the progress of the other two. The second (Eva Dahlbeck) is very happily looking forward to the birth of, she is sure, a son. The third (Bibi Andersson) is an uncaring teenager, resenting the prospect of motherhood and merely angry with the man responsible. The style is completely naturalistic, with clinical details: we see almost all of what goes on during at least one difficult and unsuccessful birth. On this evidence nine out of ten people would avoid the film, sturdily declaring it "not what I call entertainment." Yet one's final feeling is not of shock or distaste but of respect, sympathy and hope; and it is all quite absorbing. The principal characters are beautifully played (the three actresses got a collective award at Cannes), every minor character is an individual, the atmosphere is perfect. A really notable achievement, even for Bergman.

Survey

(Dates in brackets refer to *Punch* reviews)

With *So Close to Life* at the Academy is a very funny short, *The Do-It-Yourself Cartoon Kit*. Top of the list in London I would still put *L'Avventura* (7/12/60). Among the others worth attention are *La Dolce Vita* (21/12/60), Becker's last film *The Hole* (1/2/61), and the British *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning* (9/11/60). *Never on Sunday* (30/11/60) is good fun, and *No Love for Johnnie* (22/2/61) entertaining but superficial.

Releases include *The Long and the Short and the Tall* (1/3/61—105 mins.), far too stogy but in essentials good, and *Midnight Lace* (1/2/61—108 mins.), a glossy and absurd suspense story set in the Hollywood London.

— RICHARD MALLETT

AT THE OPERA

Fidelio (ROYAL OPERA HOUSE)

SUCH productions of *Fidelio* as Wieland Wagner's in the 'fifties employed bleakness, iron bars and drabness to evoke something between Bastille, Belsen and an 1850 poorhouse. All to no purpose. On whatever scale and in whatever idiom the designer environs and costumes him, Pizarro remains a small-time tyrant who indulges sneak vendettas behind the back of his benevolent monarch. Against the monolithic tyrannies of our own time, Pizarro's nastiness is microscopic.

This new Covent Garden production is not only conducted but also produced by the veteran Otto Klemperer, assisted in the second capacity by Christopher West. Where Wieland Wagner failed, Dr. Klemperer does not succeed. The plot and ideological purport of *Fidelio* are dwarfed still by the grandiose malpractices of Stalin and Hitler. One is driven, therefore, to consider everything and everybody on the stage not as ends but as symbols.

The designer in this case is Hainer Hill of the Berlin State Opera. Among Herr Hill's static symbols the most important is a menacing arch which springs forward from the back wall of the stage as if meaning to engulf not only Pizarro's prisoners but everybody in the house. We are aware of this arch even in Scene One, the gaoler's snug family kitchen, where flirting and ironing are for ever going forward. In the prison courtyard its menace becomes more beetling; it thickens the air, mutes the daylight. In the dungeon scene Hill's arch seems to bear down on Florestan like some monstrous contrivance out of Poe. No need, one would say, for the gaoler and his apprentice to dig a grave; Florestan will soon be crushed by a calculated descent of sweating masonry. The final spectacle, with Wickedness rebuked and Virtue on top of the world, is a marvellous release from the tenebrous nightmare that has gone before.

Rejoicing crowds sing their paens on a vast lowered drawbridge which leads straight into an unflinched blue sky. It is as though all Humanity were on the march into Heaven.

Any less grand and organic conception than Herr Hill's would have been refuted on the spot, as it were, by the night's music. Dr. Klemperer's *Fidelio*, like most of his concert-hall Beethoven, is lofty, majestic of tread and—especially when it comes to brass tone and phrasing—rich in sudden lights and warmth which are never conjured up by lesser batons.

It would, however, be a mistake to judge this production's essence by the uneasy première. In the opening scene it often happened that this section or that of the orchestra, as well as some of the voices, were around the beat rather than on it. Leonore's and Florestan's big expository arias—*Abscheuliche!* and *Gott, welch Dunkel hier!*, which are twin pillars of the score—were respectively underphrased and overphrased by Sena Jurinac and Jon Vickers; and in his opening number Hans Hotter, the stunningly costumed Pizarro, had a disconcerting attack of the wobbles. The securest and most warmly inflected singing was that of Gottlob Frick (gaoler), who stamped about the stage exactly as he does when Hagen in *Der Ring*; which I found confusing.

As an entr'acte between the gaol and liberation scenes, Dr. Klemperer inflicts on us the *Leonore No. 3 Overture*, involving a repeat and amplification of musical excitements from which we have hardly begun to recover. It does not excuse a gross anticlimax to plead that Gustav Mahler committed it first, in Vienna.

— CHARLES REID

ON THE AIR

What the Papers Say

AFTER the second, or it may have been third, Martini the chatter turned once more to the battle of the "Quality Sundays." Somebody suggested that the *Sunday Times* and the *Observer* might be more accurately defined as quantity papers, somebody sniggered afresh at the *Sunday Express's* claim to be included in the highbrow literature of the Day of Rest, and somebody else announced that he was giving up the *Daily Telegraph* in order to concentrate on the Sunday from the same stable. "I've given them all up, all the newspapers," said a bright young wife and mother of two. "I look in at *What the Papers Say* and that's enough for me." She got her laugh.

Well, I suppose, it *could* happen, though it certainly isn't what Sidney Bernstein or Granada would want. This excellent commercial TV programme has the best of intentions—reminding the eyes glued to the window box that there is another and older way of

exercising the optics, that one newspaper is not enough, that the press can deceive as well as inform, and that commercial TV *can* be critical of branded goods. It would, of course, be more courageous of Granada to criticize its own clients, the commercials on which it relies for its existence, just as it would be a sign of health in the press if our newspapers could afford to run features of fearless criticism about their own advertising columns. But as things are, and are likely to remain, all we get is the press knocking away in its leaders and TV columns at the abysmal standards of television, and TV (in this one programme) sniping gaily at the press.

For, let Fleet Street face it, the wide interest in this weekly round-up hangs on the degree of cynicism expressed in the voices of the speaker and readers and in the presentation of the news-cuttings. The press is a shambles and the Street is the track for a drunken rat-race. One paper leads with this, another with that, and in a third paper—for base reasons that are hinted at—the real news is omitted altogether. The press is wildly inaccurate, woolly, prejudiced, unconsciously funny and hopelessly unreliable. True, there are occasional mentions in dispatches: this paper has had the courage to do this, this editor has dared to mention that, this reporter was clearly on the spot, and that columnist has had the decency to apologize for saying this . . . But on the whole the tone of the programme is bitterly derogatory and hugely sceptical, and this, I think, is in an oblique way greatly to the credit of journalism. After all, is there another profession that would allow such deep and acid scrutiny of its corporate behaviour? And moreover without hitting back.

It may of course be argued that the gentlemen of the press care only for publicity, that they will suffer slings and arrows however undeserved so long as they are accompanied by a free mention. Possibly. But the gentlemen of other professions, equally keen to get their product into the news, are apt to be dissatisfied with anything less than eulogy. I should like to see Granada introduce a programme called *What the Channels Say*, a weekly review of the news and views put out by the BBC and commercial TV. Tackled properly it could be instructive, corrective and funny. But would the TV giants allow it? I doubt it.

Meanwhile, full marks to the people who produce and present *What the Papers Say*—Mike Wooller, Jeremy Isaacs, Brian Inglis, J. P. W. Mallalieu, and so on. They would make good critics of, for example, the advertising programme that follows them, *Jim's Inn*, which consists of fifteen minutes of the most unlikely dialogue ever perpetrated. Fifteen? Well, that's what *TV Times* made it. That's what the man said.

— BERNARD HOLLOWOOD

BOOKING OFFICE

THE ABSURD UNIVERSE OF ALBERT CAMUS

By JOHN BOWEN

Collected Fiction of Albert Camus.

Hamish Hamilton, 21/-

Resistance, Rebellion and Death. Albert Camus.

Hamish Hamilton, 21/-

"Man is that force which ultimately always cancels tyrants and gods. He is the force of evidence . . .

"I continue to believe that this world has no ultimate meaning. But I know that something in it has meaning, and that is man, because he is the only creature to insist on having one."

ALBERT CAMUS died in a car accident in 1960 at the age of forty-six. He was a *colon*—that is he was one of the 1,200,000 Algerians of French descent. He was awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1957. He wrote three novels, *The Stranger*, *The Plague* and *The Fall*, as well as a number of short stories published over here under the general title of *Exile and The Kingdom*. His early period as a writer was during the time of the Occupation, when he was a member of the French Resistance; some of the journalism he wrote during this time as well as journalism and lectures written since have been gathered into the second of the two books under review; it also includes his long essay, *Reflections on the Guillotine*, which in its logic and appalled compassion says all and more than I would ever hope to say about the practice of capital punishment. An early volume of essays, *Noces*, had its French publication in 1939, and has not yet been published in this country. He has written two philosophic books, *The Myth of Sisyphus* and *The Rebel*, and four plays, *Caligula*, *Cross-Purposes*, *Etat de Siège*, and *Les Justes*, and has adapted Dostoevsky's *The Possessed* for the stage. It is not an enormous body of work (though bigger than Forster's, after all), but it is enough to have made him a giant in his generation. "Sartre and Camus" have meant contemporary French literature to us, as unfairly but justly as "Faulkner and Hemingway" have meant American.

Camus had no idea of art as something existing outside the social context: he believed that the

artist is a social being, his ideal "to achieve complete communication among men." He was not a Christian, not an existentialist, not a communist; he did not fit easily into any compartment. He saw the universe as "absurd"—a prison in which men, simply by having been born, are condemned to death. He did not acknowledge the existence of a gaoler (the notion of absurdity would not allow one); mistaken people invent a gaoler and call him God. In doing so, they accept the limitations of their prison. Camus would not accept this; man must always be trying to find out what is "possible." Man has intelligence; it is what makes him man. Therefore he must try to impose himself upon his prison, to push back its limits, recognizing their existence, but never accepting them—rebellious constantly against the limits of the physical world and the limits of his own emotional nature. The easiest way of accepting the prison is by illusion (in which he included most sorts of mystical experience) which is a kind of self-mutilation by the intelligence. Most of

BEHIND THE SCENES



17—JANI STRASSER

Chief of Music Staff at Glyndebourne

what is evil in the world comes from illusion, because it allows man to impose himself on men in the name of something "greater."

I re-read that paragraph, and feel the foolishness of trying to encapsulate greatness, as if it were possible to offer you a free sample of Camus's vision in a Cellophane packet like a new detergent. It is the problem of all reviewers—to whom am I talking? Anyone who knows Camus's work has already stopped reading. Anyone who doesn't will be better served by my saying "If you will trust my opinion, and the opinions of many people wiser and more eminent than I, you will believe that Albert Camus was a writer of power, and insight and skill, and that you can get from his work the kind of illuminating experience that only art can give. Maybe you might like to begin with *The Stranger*, which Penguin have just published, and go on to *The Plague*. By that time you'll know whether you can respond to Camus or not, and, since his philosophic books and his novels are two aspects of the same preoccupation, you might read *The Myth of Sisyphus* next. After that you're on your own, and can lead others."

This is not criticism, of course; it's what is called "word of mouth"; which is what is said to keep *The Mousetrap* running. Word of mouth should fall from the mouth only; it looks silly in print. So let me end now with an endearing quotation—endearing because it puts Camus into an odd but (for the English) reassuring context. He was asked by an interviewer from *Demain* what experience was at the heart of his work. First, he said, there was the sun and poverty. Then sport, "from which I learned all I know of ethics."

NEW NOVELS

Heatwave in Berlin. Dymphna Cusack. Heinemann, 16/-

London, E.1. Robert Poole. Secker and Warburg, 18/-

Like a Big Brave Man. Celso Al. Carunungan. Gollancz, 16/-

Sail a Crooked Ship. Nathaniel Benchley. Hutchinson, 15/-

DYMPHNA CUSACK'S *Heatwave in Berlin* is a well-planned and vivid novel. It is also extremely alarming; for if her general facts are right—and it would have been inconceivably irresponsible to have made them up—West Germany is back in the early '30s, with the swastika blossoming under cover like the evil fungi of dry rot. The book describes the return of a German emigrant and his Australian

wife, and her gradual nightmare discovery that his family, enormously rich Prussian industrialists, are up to their necks in the Neo-Nazi movement. They are drawn accurately and without mercy, in all their pudding-headed arrogance, still believing mystically in the old nonsense about blood and race. They have no shame about the Jews, and keep a Nazi shrine in their heavy, ugly house full of sacred relics of the party. The girl is taken to a beer-cellar where she hears the "Horst Wessel" song; she learns to her astonishment of school teachers sacked for refusing to subscribe to Hitler's greatness, and of gas-chamber doctors out of prison and in fat practices. Miss Cusack writes dramatic narrative. On its own merits, as a novel, this one is exciting. Can we and the Americans really have bungled things quite so badly a second time?

One of the most able first novels I have found for years, *London, E.1*, is an authentic reflection of the warmth and fecklessness of the kind of slum family from which the author, Robert Poole, himself springs. As a boy his hero has a passionate ambition to escape from the hopeless round of boozy poverty, but his parents are unaware of any other life and he is always thwarted; they refuse to let him take up a scholarship, and he is driven into mild crime by the demands of a silly girl he is in love with, and finally murders. *London, E.1* is a powerful tract against the slums, which anyone should read who still doubts where young criminals are bred, but first of all it is a very human and sympathetic novel. The boy's mother, a battered old washer-woman, is a great character, and his incoherent affection for her is beautifully conveyed.

Celso Al. Carunungan is a Filipino who I suspect has soaked himself in

William Saroyan and Robert Nathan and the rest of the American school of innocence. His novel, *Like a Big Brave Man*, is about very engaging people who all love each other very much. A Filipino boy, from a happy family in a happy village, is brought to New York by the relatives of an airman his parents had befriended in the war. He stays with an uncle and aunt, and his impressions of America make delightful reading. There are no beatniks or drug-addicts or coshboys in this book; everything is seen through slightly distorted rose-coloured spectacles and described with artless simplicity and humour. It makes a nice change.

The wild farce of Nathaniel Benchley's *Sail a Crooked Ship* gives a rather different picture of the American scene. His hero, an ex-naval officer, is kidnapped with his prim fiancée by a bunch of bank-robbers to navigate an old ship they are stealing from the mothball fleet in the Hudson River. After a hair-raising voyage they tie up at Boston, where the officer becomes involved in a successful raid on a bank. The conversation of the hoodlums and their tame dumb blonde is fascinating, and Mr. Benchley piles up crazy situations which somehow he makes plausible.

—ERIC KEOWN

BIBLIOGRAPHICAL GENIUS

Rosenbach. A Biography. Edwin Wolf with John Fleming. Weidenfeld and Nicholson, 63/-

Edwin Wolf, who has built this monument to the American bookseller Doctor Rosenbach, entered the firm when he was eighteen and the depression had just begun. John Fleming, his collaborator, had joined it a few years earlier at a time when "Rosy" was

bringing off such coups as the purchase of Lewis Carroll's original manuscript of *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*. Mr. Wolf is often inaccurate on English names and habits, but to those who can stifle for a while the feeling that books are for reading and not precious objects to be kept in safes this is a fascinating story, balanced between scholarship and racketeering. Though Doctor Rosenbach was a whisky-loving libertine he rose to the top of his profession by bibliographical genius and a shrewd assessment of the mental quirks of his customers. It is not too much to say that he could go through a library like a dose of salts, as on the occasion when Sir Shane Leslie took him for a tour of Irish noblemen. There remains the Rosenbach Foundation in Philadelphia as a token that the greatest bookseller of his age believed in books even more than he believed in dollars.

—VIOLET POWELL

DOCUMENTATION OF DESPAIR

The Outlaws of Partinico. Danilo Dolci. MacGibbon and Kee, 25/-

Under-developed western Sicily with a population of 430,000 averages a murder every five days. Partinico itself has 161 of its 25,000 inhabitants in prison serving more than 714 years for "banditry." Wordy, devious, inconsequential as the chatter of these illiterate peasants, *The Outlaws of Partinico* attempts a survey of the present-day destitution that prompted such violence, of neglected sick and police-tortured prisoners, of more than 7,000 men idle six months in the year, of official lethargy and corruption that allow irrigation schemes to stagnate and flagrant trawler poaching to ruin inshore fishing. The author himself was imprisoned when he attempted, Gandhi-like, to demonstrate the people's desperate hunger for work. The result could have been a dramatic story but might thus have proved less disturbing than these fragments of plaintive individual frustration. Only an occasional translator's footnote suggests a glimmer of hope among the men and women from many parts of Europe who have become helpers and friends of the remarkable Danilo Dolci. —C. CONWAY PLUMBE

BALLIOL TO BROMPTON

Father Faber. Ronald Chapman. Burns, Oates, 35/-

Anybody interested in the Oxford Movement, the Roman Church in the generation after Newman's conversion, early-Victorian England or the pathology of ecclesiastical temperaments will be delighted by this unsparing biography, by a sardonic coreligionist, of the exuberant maker of Brompton Oratory. It is based on collections of manuscript letters and a few biographies and does not take much notice of the world outside Faber.

Mr. Chapman argues that his lush, baroque sermons, his fluent, romantic



"How about one last fling?"

verse and his over-written devotional prose rest on a hard foundation of professional theology; as well as being a charming, if wild, conversationalist, a brash careerist and a ruthless ruler, he was a clever man. He was also, at times, an abject one. As he writhed in abasement before Newman, his spiritual father and rival and enemy, he illustrated one of the most curious aspects of the nineteenth-century mind, its craving to be filial. Some of the minor figures and episodes are fascinating and the biography, in its solid way, is not only revealing but rather fun.

— R. G. G. PRICE

ARE THE CLASSICS NECESSARY?

Essays in Antiquity. Peter Green. Murray, 21/-

Challenging indeed is the quality of these essays which combine to answer recent attacks on teaching the classics (are they really necessary?). The humanities, states Dr. Green, have been "fighting a rearguard action" for some time, and "academic myopia" has brought about this humiliation. Dr. Green is a hard hitter, and many of his academic confrères will feel definitely edgy after reading his analysis of their inadequacy. This author makes an admirable point which the establishment could ponder: "At a time when the humanities, as part of the educational curriculum, are struggling for sheer survival, more people than ever before in recorded history are reading—and enjoying—classical authors purged of otiose learning..." He is mainly referring to the sales of Penguin Classics. Let us look at these classical matters in relation to the contemporary social scene is Dr. Green's main thesis, and most vital is his own individual parallel and instruction. Nothing dull or dead here: these entertaining essays reveal the perennial and ever-topical value of scholarship.

— KAY DICK

DE SENECTUTE

Man Against Aging. Dr. Robert de Ropp. Gollancz, 21/-

What is the secret of longevity? The question has always been asked, and quite often answered, though never conclusively. Dr. Ropp provides an entertaining historical survey of the subject, beginning with Medea's rejuvenation of King Aeson and concluding with the latest theories of contemporary medical practitioners. Steinach, Voronoff, Brown-Séquard and the rest are demolished in turn, nor has Dr. Ropp much faith in more recent panaceas, though he seems to approve (if a little half-heartedly) a régime of yeast and bone-meal, combined with the strict avoidance of alcohol—a fashion which seems unlikely to become very popular, even among the higher age-groups. Dr. Ropp is at his best when he sticks to plain medical facts; his generalizations seldom

go far beyond the obvious (don't live with your in-laws, hunger is the best sauce, etc.).

Popular medical books always have an agreeably macabre fascination, and this one is no exception: can one be quite sure that one isn't suffering from phenylpyruvic oligophrenia? No, one can't; but even that, one feels, would be preferable to a diet of bone-meal and water.

— JOCELYN BROOKE

CAPTAIN'S HAND ON SHOULDER

The Path to Leadership. Field-Marshal the Viscount Montgomery of Alamein. Collins, 21/-

Field-Marshal Montgomery has set out to define leadership: "It is 'captaincy' which counts, together with the power of decision and an understanding of human nature." That is what he has to say, and he uses cookery book phrases: "In no case will good results be obtained unless..."

He gives potted biographies of men like Jenghiz Khan, Abraham Lincoln and Cromwell. The chapter on Moses has to be read to be believed. Not surprisingly, he is better on modern leaders; the studies of Nehru, Nuffield, Churchill and Alanbrooke are never complete even in outline, but the anecdotes are interesting.

In the chapter on de Gaulle, the Field-Marshal comes to life, because for once he has to argue his case. He argues convincingly that de Gaulle is the only man to lead a united West—except that he is seventy-one.

Then we are off again on a quick round-up of the world situation, and a chapter of Christian magazine advice on how to bring up the young.

The Path to Leadership is likeable because Lord Montgomery's warmth and real humility do emerge. But it is no longer enough to say "It is the countries which lack the big ideals which should be called 'second-rate' powers." People are more knowing now, and believe in less.

— KENNETH MARTIN



"Frankly, I don't see why you're so anxious to make Kennedy an Honorary Chief. Honorary Chiefs Coolidge, Hoover, Roosevelt, Truman and Eisenhower—what good did they ever do us?"

CREDIT BALANCE

The Beat Scene. Ed. Elias Wilentz. Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 14/6. A wide-ranging anthology of poems and candid-camera shots that reveals America's Beat Generation in all its flamboyant unimportance. The poems are uniformly awful, the photographs by Fred McDarrah are fine, their subjects picturesque, and it all adds up to an interesting social phenomenon.

Smaller Slang Dictionary. Eric Partridge. Routledge and Kegan Paul, 18/-. A useful abbreviation of Partridge's large *Dictionary*, with the obsolete, the underworld and the obscene eliminated. Brief derivations are included. The whole effect is slightly literary, because of the preponderance of rhyming slang. "Hep" is in, but not "hip."

Shanties from the Seven Seas. Stan Hugill. Routledge and Kegan Paul, 63/-. A most enjoyable collection of true shanties (not the massed-choir or brown-windsor-baritone sort) with music and many variants. Mr. Hugill was a working shantyman, and most of his sources are the memories of other shantymen, but the book is not at all amateurish. Despite a slightly self-conscious tarriness the linking and explanatory matter is useful and amusing. It is a pity that so much bowdlerization was necessary.



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BLOCK LETTERS PLEASE



FOR WOMEN

Just Imagine

WOMEN without imagination may not be rare but they are worth their weight in solid fact. Far from being scorned for such an attribute they should be fêted, praised and promptly married.

True, they will trail no clouds of glory through the house, such as arrangements of tortured twigs in cast-off teapots, or hexagonal cushions cut from old fur coats; but neither will they trail unsettled hair-dos, bills or temperaments.

In clothes alone their lack of vision has a financial value past all reckoning; from the things they do not see themselves in at the mannequin parades to the garments they don't cut up to make other garments. This more than compensates for their dearer holidays—(for of course they can't close their eyes on top of a Cheviot and pretend it's an Alp.)

But even on expensive jaunts they are easy travellers, burdened neither with the remedies for improbable disasters nor the spare and draughty waiting-time that might have been filled with wrong directions, missed connections or packing-list resurrections.

Unimaginative women don't experiment and fail, whether it's just inserting twiddly bits into a knitting-pattern and ending up with yet another dish-cloth, or pouring exotic fruits and vintage

wines into a home-made recipe that gives the cat convulsions. Nor, for that matter, do they experiment and succeed, growing a Chinese lounge from one brass dragon and two willow-pattern plates.

Worry on the grand scale never touches them at all. They can no more see their late-home loved ones flattened under Corporation buses than they can visualise the devastating impact that a misplaced strand of hair will make upon a crowded ballroom. They are not afraid of cellars. Their insomnia conjures up no burglars dripping blood, or boa-constrictors slithering under hat-box lids, and their muted sense of smell keeps gas-escapes and smouldering dustbins on the sunny side of panic. Nor do they explode into hysterical despair before insurance ads. of husbands' ghosts watching benevolently over firelit families.

For a husband who wants a quiet life, what better asset than a wife who can't imagine him with a beard, another woman or a seat in Parliament? A wife who opens parcels, oven doors and conversations with the same calm certainty? A wife who takes in telegrams without draping herself from head to foot in Dior black?

Unimaginative motherhood does not toddle before it crawls. It does not teach Greek alphabets to three-year-olds

or check up heat-rash symptoms underneath "Bubonic Plague." At the health visitor's knock it does not sweep the entire contents of the nursery out into the spare back bedroom, and it does not dial "999" for a missing curtain-hook. Its charges are both clean and warmly clad, wearing thick jerseys under flimsy party-frocks, but never navy undies that refuse to show the dirt. It does not look for early genius, and is never taken by surprise.

Unimaginative husbands may appreciate the thrift of rainbow bedsocks fashioned from a dozen shrunken-jersey welts, but they are apt to miss the finer points of arty decorations—(Christmas cards, for instance, lattice-taped across the television screen). Imaginative husbands, on the other hand, merely resent not having thought of such things for themselves. And what man does not yearn for a wife who does not yearn? Even the least imaginative husband must realise what a sight he looks at dawn, and that the eye-level grill fools nobody but a circus midget. Yet the world is simply full of men refusing to marry women who can't imagine why.

— HAZEL TOWNSON



Citation

"Miss Regan also signed the honorary life membership certificates presented to four members of the association who had been members for three years or more and who celebrated their eightieth birthday decently."

Kentish Times



I'm Dynamite, Mate

I'VE found many people who've seen a film called *The Wages of Fear*, and they have all told me just how scared they were "all the way through," whatever that may mean. Now, I used to work in a laboratory attached to a factory making explosives. At that time no one considered it so unusual, at least, not in that the factory made explosives. "In the lab," mind, *was* a step up from the common herd. I was living, at that time, in a small town whose sole industry was the factory; either you worked there or you drew the dole. You had the option. The only noteworthy feature of the whole thing was that, if you worked, you were looked upon as a coffee-buying potential by the dole-drawers.

But now I find myself the hit of any social gathering merely by saying, "I worked with nitro-glycerine for four years." People gather round and stare at me with awe-struck eyes. I don't think I'd be a bigger attraction were I to grow another head. With a catch in the voice, they whisper, "Were you? Tell me more..."

But the truth is so dull. We had a flood, but I wasn't in it, and an explosion, but I was on holiday at the time and I missed that too. I washed up about a million test-tubes and broke four million more by poking the brush down so far that it shot out of the other end. But that's not really what people want to hear. They want to be told tales of bravery, courage, and sudden, lurching fears. The time I faced up to one of my bosses (I had four or five at the time) and said I'd like to go off ten minutes early does not stir them to the depths. The terror I felt when I found

the cotton I'd used to sew a button on the manager's jacket was rotten and would hardly last till he got home leaves them cold—and not with fear. (The reel had been a flood-victim and the soaking in brine had not strengthened the fibres much.)

They ask me if I ever handled the nitro-glycerine itself, and when I say, "Of course," they wait around, obviously expecting me to detonate before their very eyes. They get a little peevisish when I don't, too. If I mention, quite casually, that I used to burn the waste explosives of the week, every Saturday morning, by taking it out to a patch of bare earth, putting it down, pouring paraffin over it and lighting the lot, they think I'm crazy. But it's true. Once I was asked if I *cared* for that job. To be frank, I didn't. It always meant about four journeys, because I could never remember to take everything I needed the first time and I am fundamentally an idle person. I said so, and gave those reasons too. The lady questioning me has steadfastly ignored me ever since. I think she believes I was mocking her.

"But what did you do?" is a favourite expression. Well, everybody has routine jobs; mine was head sweeper of floors and chief bottle-washer. Apart from that, I spent all my time looking as busy as I could. If I had nothing else to do, I used to sharpen pencils, tidy cupboards and carry pieces of paper around. If anybody asked what I was doing, I was just taking this or just bringing it back. But that sort of thing never does satisfy anyone's craving for vicarious emotions.

"Have you never been frightened?"

Nowadays I live next to the A1 road. I'm scared out of my wits every time I have to cross that. I am also shy and nervous of strangers, given to loud hoots of whinnying laughter for no apparent reason whenever I am introduced to one. I enjoy parties best from afar, unless I have known everybody there for years. As for clothes, I could no more pluck up the courage to walk into a dress shop and *ask to try anything on* than I could fly to the moon. So, until nudity becomes the thing in England, or I become far more proficient with my needle than I am to-day, the world of fashion will pass me by. But I'll still have my two minutes per party, during which I hold the stage.

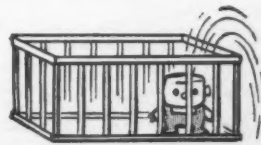
— TERESA BALDWINSON

Bargain

SOMETIMES I wonder, standing here at the sink,
If the washing-powder makers couldn't re-think
The whole Threepence Off position, seeing it's got
So the Off is the ordinary price and the ordinary's not:

Then I tell myself no. The world isn't run that way.
I am commerce's mug; I am housewife, sucker, prey.
I will keep my soul by calling the thing a racket—
And make jolly well sure I'm getting an off-price packet.

— ANGELA MILNE



ROY DAVIS

Toby Competitions

No. 156—R.I.P.

THERE are rumours that yet more newspapers may have to close down. Write an epitaph suitable for inscription on the tomb of any national daily or Sunday. Limit 100 words.

A framed *Punch* original, to be selected from all available drawings, is offered for the best entry. Runners-up receive a one-guinea book token. Entries by **Wednesday, March 15.** Address to TOBY COMPETITIONS No. 156, *Punch*, 10 Bouverie Street, London, E.C.4.

Report on Competition No. 153

(And a Bottle of Rum)

Shanties for politically-minded pirates (in view of the *Santa Maria* incident) were required. Rather naturally, many entries followed existing patterns fairly closely and quite a few relied on Gilbert. The first prize goes, mainly for the sake of its original setting, to:

E. O. PARROTT
47 DAVER COURT
CHELSEA MANOR STREET
S.W.3

Democracy for the Isle of Wight! Yo-Ho for the Island Ferry!
We'll sail the Solent and Spithead, a pirate crew so merry!
We've plenty of gin, so we won't give in, till the Englanders surrender.

Oh, we'll proudly wag our Crossbones' flag,
and sneer at the Railway tender.
Oh, a seaborne hell is the *Shanklin Belle*!
Heave-ho on the ropes, my hearties!
We'll careen and play
Down at Alum Bay
With grog and cocoa parties.

Then Yo-Heave-Ho on the clockwork, lads,
we'll heave the paddles round,
With the wild sea-spray on our faces, lads,
when we are Ventnor-bound!
We'll stalwart stand for our fair Wight land,
we'll make the tyrants stoop.
Let the grapeshot whine, as we bravely dine,
the Lords of Wight on the poop.
Oh, a seaborne hell, etc.

Following are the runners-up:

We'll sail for Cape Canaveral to sweep the
Martian Main.
We'll board a Russian satellite and sail it
back again.
With our pirate rockets raking Space, we'll
very, very soon
Establish our New Order in the Mountains
of the Moon.
So heave away, my Hearties!
Pin the Roger to a star;
We'll liberate a planet if we ever get as far.

But before we came to take off, the powder
in our fuse
Refused to spark whatever fuel these
wretched rockets use.
So still we polish pamphlets; for us no
Martian Main
Nor snaps of unveiled Venus in a horizontal
plane.



"Have you the same thing in a Redbrick?"

So heave away, my Hearties!
Pin the Roger to a star;
We'll liberate a planet if we ever get as far.
I. H. Segar, Vennholme, 48 Venn Grove,
Hartley, Plymouth

We're a rollicking band of statesmen hurled
From the shores of our native land,
With the party-piratical flag unfurled
We shall make a valiant stand.
For the day will dawn when the world will
know

'That we're back in charge "d'affaires,"
From a short, sharp blow to the status quo
With piratical coups-de-mer.
For we are the monarch and the parliament
Of that land across the sea;
The executive pure, and the legislature,
And the jolly judiciary!

A. Cribb, Lime Cottage, St. Ippolyts,
Hitchin, Herts.

The pirates of old plundered, murdered and
sank:

Oh, Blackbeard, O!
The women were raped and the men walked
the plank
And they sailed to the Rio Grande.

We pirates to-day lack such evil intent;
Oh, Galva-O!
By taking a ship without owners' consent,
We strive for the Promised Land.

Aquatic ve-hicles we solemnly pinch,
Oh, Galva-O!
In desperate hopes that dictators may flinch,
Ere we make for the nearest land.
Commander Robert T. Bower, 3 Oakhill
Road, Putney, S.W.15.

O, Salazar, we're out to grieve you!
(Away, *Santa Maria*)
Of this good ship, we must bereave you
(Away, it's time to go, from your hanging
fury).

O, Salazar, we hate your slaughters:
Our plan's to stir up troubled waters.

O, Salazar, you'll call me pirate:
The name is yours: your deeds inspire it.

O, Salazar, our cruise will show you
For what you are, the world shall know you.

O, Salazar, we're here to warn you
You'll get no help: the nations scorn you.

O, Salazar, we're bound to leave you:
We trust our trip will more than peeve you.

Allan M. Laing, 19 Wavertree Nook Road,
Liverpool, 15

☆

"What does the Bank think about all the criticism? Said the spokesman: 'There is always criticism when a new note is put into circulation, especially if it looks different.'"

He added comfortably: 'People soon get used to the change.'—*Daily Mail*

What change?

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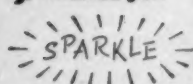
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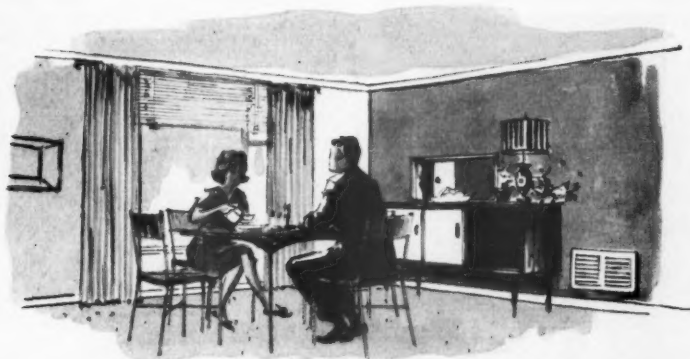
Punch, March 8 1961

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The Knave of Hearts is a soldier. He normally carries a battleaxe in one hand and an olive branch in the other, being descended from the god Mercury. During the French Revolution, when they denounced all the Court cards, he was called Equality, and his Queen was called Liberty. But he'd rather be a Jackanapes



Even Knaves love Player's

The Knave is a bit of a card. He is keen on the Queen, and now Player's have redesigned him and put their good cigarettes in his pocket, he is always ready to offer her a smooth cigarette and light it for her. If the King ever catches him at it, he'll get his head cut off, but until then he's alright Jack. He's worth ten of the best to

most players. All these happy smokers have a pleasant superstition about the Knave. As soon as he is dealt they pull out a packet of Player's and light up. They call it *One for His Nob*. Even people who don't play cards do this, because though they may not like cards, they just love Player's. **People love Player's**

